Celibacy, Revelations, and Reincarnated Lamas: Contestation and Synthesis in the Growth of Monasticism at Katok Monastery from the 17th through 19th Centuries

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Abstract

This is a study of Katok Monastery in the Degé region of Kham in eastern Tibet. Katok Monastery was founded in 1159 and is one of the most influential monasteries of the Nyingma sect. The dissertation explores a crisis in the continuity of tradition and administration at Katok as impelled by volatile changes in regional politics and religion during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For the first several hundred years of Katok's distinctive history, its primary self-identification was as a b astion of Nyingma esoteric scriptural traditions translated into the Tibetan language during the imperial period called the Kama. Katok was also a celibate community – at least in terms of its ideals and reputation – for its first several hundred years. The historical analysis of this study begins with a profound transformation of its original administration and religious programs during the mid-seventeenth century rise of the new Degé kingdom in Kham. This new polity injected itself directly into the life of the monastery by imposing on it a new head lama, Longsel Nyingpo (1625-1692). This lama was not a proponent of the Kama but instead a discoverer of revealed scriptures (Terma). Moreover, he was a non-celibate lama whose successor was his biological son.

The dissertation thus begins with a rupture with the past and traces the reverberations that rippled through the monastery as the changes introduced by this lama were variously challenged, altered, and codified. Broader developments within the Nyingma Sc hool and the Degé kingdom also impacted the cultural and administrative life of the monastery, such that the vicissitudes of Katok provide important glimpses into the religious history of the region overall. By the early nineteenth century the monastery's administration and curricula had been thoroughly reformulated in such a way that both the Kama and the revelations of Longsel Nyingpo were integrated into the core liturgical and scholastic programs at the monastery, and celibate monasticism was revived. Additionally, new institutional and educational practices originating outside the monastery – especially the recognition of reincarnated lamas, the revival of monasticism, and the study of the literary arts – were also firmly incorporated into the monastery.

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Lastly and especially, I thank my loving family. I could describe them with many more adjectives in order to specify all the ways that they benefit me but just saying that they love me in the true sense of the word captures it just as well.

Introduction

This study explores a crisis in the continuity of tradition and administration at a Tibetan monastery as impelled by volatile changes in regional politics and religion during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The institution at the heart of this dissertation is Katok Monastery (*kaH thog dgon*), founded in 1159 in eastern Tibet (Kham; *khams*). Katok is one of the oldest continuously running monasteries in Tibetan history, an influential center of the Nyingma School, and one of the most important Buddhist institutions in Kham. For the first several hundred years of Katok's distinctive history, its primary self-identification was as a bastion of Nyingma (*rnying ma*) esoteric scriptural traditions translated into the Tibetan language during the imperial period called the Kama (*bka' ma*), literally "transmitted precepts". Katok was also a celibate community – at least in terms of its ideals and reputation – for its first several hundred years. This study does not, however, dwell on the early history of the monastery.[1] Rather the historical analysis herein begins with a profound transformation of its original administration and religious programs during the mid-seventeenth century rise of the new Degé (*sde dge*) kingdom in

[1] Cf. Eimer, Helmut, "Daten Von Frühen Äbten Und Lehrern Des Klosters Kaḥ Thog in Derge (Khams);" and Eimer, Helmut and Pema Tsering, "Äbte Und Lehrer Von Kaḥ Thog; Eine Erste Übersicht Zur Geschichte Eines Rñiṅ Ma Pa-Klosters in Derge/Khams." and "A List of Abbots of Kaḥ-Thog Monastery According to Handwritten Notes By the Late Katok Ontul."

Kham. This new polity injected itself directly into the life of the monastery by imposing on it a new head lama, Longsel Nyingpo (*klong gsal snying po*; 1625 - 1692). This lama was not a proponent of the Kama but instead a "discoverer" of revealed scriptures (Terma; *gter ma*). Moreover, he was a non-celibate lama whose successor was his biological son.

The dissertation thus begins with a rupture with the past and traces the reverberations that rippled through the monastery as the changes introduced by this lama were variously challenged, altered, and codified. Broader developments within the Nyingma School and the Degé kingdom also impacted the cultural and administrative life of the monastery, such that the vicissitudes of Katok provide important glimpses into the religious history of the region overall. By the early nineteenth century the monastery's administration and curricula had been thoroughly reformulated in such a way that both the Kama and the revelations of Longsel Nyingpo were integrated into the core liturgical and scholastic programs at the monastery, and celibate monasticism was revived. Additionally, new institutional and educational practices originating outside the monastery – especially the recognition of reincarnated lamas, the revival of monasticism, and the study of the literary arts – were also firmly incorporated into the monastery.

The study of Katok's historical transformation during turbulent religious and political times in Tibet makes important contributions to a number of central scholarly issues. These include 1) the historical process of growth and decline of individual monastic institutions, 2) the development of Buddhist scholasticism, 3) the

institutionalization of cults of revealed scriptures, 4) the rise of reincarnate lamas, and 5) the religious history of eastern Tibet. Furthermore, these issues are analyzed in terms of their interrelations, such as the manner in which the growth of monasticism both conflicts with and complements the rise of reincarnate lamas, or in how the cults of revealed scriptures at first displace but eventually come to co-exist with the Kama and scholasticism. This dissertation utilizes numerous previously unstudied texts to chronicle and analyze the processes set in motion by the initial crisis as they unfolded over a two hundred period.

The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism

The Nyingma School – meaning Old School or The Ancients – is one of the most diverse and widespread sectarian traditions in the Tibetan world. Under the umbrella of the Nyingma School, one finds religious communities that are non-celibate on principle, strictly celibate monasteries, mixed communities in religious "encampments" (*sgar*) or sacred pilgrimage sites, modest village temples, scholastic centers whose lamas have written classics of Tibetan literature, and a spectrum of religious specialists ranging from barefoot priest to lay visionaries to refined establishment lamas. The internal diversity of the Nyima is not predicated upon a harmonious systematization, but rather is the production of a dynamic and constantly changing balance of religious modalities in perpetual tension with each other. This dissertation contributes to our understanding of the relations between various elements of the school through presenting a dramatic confrontation between central

strands of Nyingma intellectual and institutional life during a pivotal period in East Tibetan history.

The monastic and scholastic sides of the Nyingma School are less well covered in the secondary scholarship than the lay and village-level elements of the school. Up until very recently, it was commonplace for scholars to portray the Nyingma School as far less internally diverse than it is and describe it as expemplifying one "pole" of the spectrum of religious types in Tibet - non-monastic, mystical, unreformed, apolitical, and so on. This view is quickly diminishing away as more historically oriented scholars have begun to appreciate the genius of Nyingma philosophical and tantric traditions and the vitality of their contemporary academies.[2] The recent work of Dreyfus on Tibetan monastic education, in particular, has surveyed new territory in Nyingma studies. Thanks to this and the work of other scholars such as Duckworth, Jackson, Kapstein, Pettit, and Smith, we now have a good understanding of the turn of the twentieth -century history of Nyingma "commentarial schools" (*bshad grwa*), the theses of Mipam Gyatso (*mi pham rgya mtsho*; 1846 -1912), and the related innovations fostered by the nonsectarian movement (*ris med*). This study will further nuance the emerging picture of Nyingma by providing the historical grounding required to satisfactorily explain the institutional factors that allowed for the rise of the nonsectarian movement and the efflorescence of Nyingma scholarship at the turn of the twentieth century. Some of

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[2] See Gemano, "Re-membering the Dismembered Body of Tibet," for an article about the most important Nyingma academy in all of contemporary Tibet.

the scholars mentioned above do not give sufficient consideration to the historical chains of events and influential social factors that helped make possible the institutions and practices they analyze. One of the va lues of this study is its articulation of a historical missing link that explains how the institutional groundwork upon which the nonsectarian movement was based – i.e., large Nyingma monasteries in Kham with vigorous scholastic training – came into being from the seventeenth through early twentieth centuries. This study is also a structural missing link that shows how the transmitted Kama and revealed Terma traditions of literature, practice, and thought interact when both are present at the same monastery. This work therefore builds upon the excellent dissertations by Dalton and Jacoby, each of who investigate the social and literary histories of either the Kama or Terma, but in relative isolation from the other.

The Kama: Scriptures of the Old Translation School and Their Commentaries

The beginning of Chapter One presents the history of the region in Kham in which Katok is situated. Thus here in the introduction it will be helpful to explain the Kama and Terma religious traditions in the Nyingma school, and how their dynamic interplay played out at Katok in the centuries preceding the time period covered in this study. The Kama (*bka' ma*) is the lesser known of the two in Buddhist studies. The *ka* (*bka'*) of Kama is an honorific term meaning exalted statement, teaching, or scripture. In interpersonal and institutional settings, *ka* signifies an authoritative

order made by a superior. In terms of religious literature *ka* is a translation of the Sanskrit *vacana* and means Word, as in *buddhavacana*, the Word of the Buddha. For instance the canon of Buddhist sūtras and tantras in Tibet is called the "Ka-gyur" (*bka' 'gyur*), the translations (gyur) of the Buddha's *ka*. Kama is a compound of *ka* and the syllable *ma*, the latter being a generic suffix syllable indicating the feminine gender without further semantic import. For instance, books and traditions are occasionally given a feminine suffix syllable without any specific implication. The scriptures referred to by the uniquely Nyingma name of Kama are those that (purportedly) were translated during the imperial period (seventh to mid-ninth centuries) and whose lines of oral transmission were maintained from then into the medieval period; the term Kama can also signify the ritual and commentarial traditions associated with these particular scriptures. Ronald Davidson translates Kama simply as Holy Word;[3] Dorjé and Kapstein translate Kama as Transmitted Precepts; and Dalton translates it as Spoken Teachings.[4] In this dissertation Kama is left untranslated and refers primarily to the liturgical and exegetical traditions of these continuously transmitted scriptures held to be canonical by the Nyingma School.

What is the history of the use of this term in the Nyingma School? What are the scriptures to which the Kama pertains? Davidson offers the most succinct

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[3] Davidson, Tibetan Renaissance, 73.

[4] Dudjom Rinpoche, *History of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (tr. Dorje and Kapstein) and Dalton, "The Uses of the *Dgongs Pa 'Dus Pa'i Mdo* in the Development of the Rnying-Ma School of Tibetan Buddhism."

discussion of the early Kama as the foundational scriptures of the Nyingma School. He writes,[5]

> By the eleventh century, the systems of Buddhism surviving from the dynasty were termed Nyingma, a designation represented in tension with the Sarma tantric and philosophical systems introduced beginning in the late tenth century. Those practices and texts ostensibly handed down in a continuous lineage from the period of the early translations were named Kahma, the Holy Word…."

As such the Kama is conservative, bound to a relatively fixed canon.

The sectarian traditions that originated during the period of the later translation period (post-tenth century) – the "Sarma" (*gsar ma*) – did not accept the authenticity of many of the tantras that the Nyingma claim were translated by their forefathers during the imperial period. The Sarma schools asserted that many of the tantras that the Nyingma held as canonical lacked Indian source texts and were therefore inauthentic in one way or another. As the first compilers of the Buddhist canon in Tibet did not accept the validity of many of the Nyingma tantras, they were excluded from many of the "Ka-gyur" (*Kangyur*) collections of Buddha-voiced texts, such that these tantras were instead collected in an offshoot canon called the *Collected Tantras of the Nyingmapa* (*rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum*).[6] The Nyingma

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[5] Davidson, Tibetan Renaissance, 73.

[6] In this dissertation the translation of Tibetan text titles will follow the translations developed by Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein in Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*. See especially the "works cited by the author," vol. 2, 199-296.

organize their tantras according to a doxographical system that differs from the Sarma doxography, and which has partial correspondences with Bönpo doxography. The Nyingmas and Bönpos developed a system of "vehicles" (*theg pa; yāna*), or major categories of teachings and their associated religious goals, that is comprised of nine vehicles, as opposed to the three vehicles of the standard Sarma doxography.[7] For the Nyingma, the first three vehicles are known as the causal vehicles of dialectics (*rgyu mtshan nyid theg pa*) and pertain to the exoteric systems. The latter six vehicles are known as the resultant vehicles of secret mantra (*gsang sngags 'bras bu theg pa*) and the first three concern the outer tantras and the last three the inner tantras. In order from lowest to highest, the inner tantras are known as the vehicles of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. The Kama, then, are essentially the core scriptures belonging to the three inner tantras, and the commentarial, liturgical, and contemplative writings on them composed by Indian and Tibetan masters.

The community originally most identified with developing and propagating the Kama was the Zur (*zur*) family. The Zur family was not originally aristocracy from Central Tibet, but instead hailed from eastern Tibet (Kham; *khams*). In the tenth century Zurpoché Shakya Jungné (*zur po che shakya 'byung gnas*) traveled from his homeland of Kham to central Tibet and, after studying many Nyingma tantras, established a temple named Ukpalung (*'ug pa lung*) in Tsang (*gtsang*).[8] Zurpoche

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[7] For the best historical considerations of the formation of the nine vehicles system see Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism,* 13-17. Dudjom, *Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, Book One, contains an expertly translated presentation of the nine vehicles.

[8] Dudjom, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, 617. Ukpalung is close to Shigatsé (*gshis ka rtse*), Ngor (*ngor*), and Narthang (*snar thang*).

was succeeded for two generations by relatives; Zurchung Sherapdrak (*zur chung shes rab grags*) and Zur Shakya Sengé (*zur shakya seng ge*), respectively. The masters of the Zur clan inherited many liturgies, meditation manuals, and scholastic commentaries on the Nyingma tantras that were either composed in India or by earlier Tibetans. They also contributed their own writings to this corpus of texts, initiating a tradition of great longevity, diversity, and appeal.[9]

The Zur family especially favored three Nyingma tantras, which they viewed as emblematic of the three vehicles of the inner yogas: the *Secret Nucleus Tantra* (*guhyagarbha tantra; rgyud gsang ba snying po*) belonging to the Mahāyoga, the *Sūtra That Gathers All Intentions* (*dgongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo* belonging to the Anuyoga), and the *All-Accomplishing King* (*kun byed rgyal po*) belonging to the Atiyoga. The first two tantras were each the primary subject of dozens of volumes of liturgical and scholastic writing, while the third was a central topic of many scholastic commentaries and contemplation-oriented writings. In this regards, it will be helpful to excerpt Dalton's summation of the Zur role in the Kama and the key components of the Kama in the narrower definition of the rubric,[10]

> Under the stewardship of the Zurs, these three tantras – the *Sūtra,* the *Guhyagarbha* and the *Kun byed rgyal po* – were gathered together as a triad that became known as the *mdo-rgyud-sems-gsum* ('sūtra-tantra-mind triad'). The Zurs established these three works as the root tantras

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[9] For more on the lamas of the Zur family and the informal lineage of later lamas who followed their commentarial and liturgical traditions, see Garson, *Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra*, 209-239.

[10] Dalton, "The Uses of the *Dgongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo* in the Development of the Rnying-ma School," 102.

> of anuyoga, mahāyoga, and atiyoga respectively…. The Zurs also referred to the early tantras collectively as the "Spoken Teachings" (*bka' ma*), which they juxtaposed to the newly revealed teachings (*gter ma*). The Spoken Teachings were so closely linked to the Zur clan at this time that they even became known as the "Zur spoken class" (*bka' sde zur pa*).

The notion of the "Kama" thus had both a broad meaning as a rubric applied to many texts and compliations, as well as signifying this narrower conception. Either way, it is not at all clear to what extent a distinct set of texts circulated as a whole under this rubric. However, in the early years of this century, an expanded edition of one hundred and twenty core tantric texts was published under the rubric of the Kama.[11] The Kama and the "Trio of the *Sūtra*, *Illusion,* and *Mind*" (*mdo sgyu sems gsum*) are synonymous in the Katok literature relied upon for this study. The three classes of yoga, or vehicles, of the Kama and their respective chief tantras have been the canonical sources for much scholastic, liturgical, and contemplative writings by Indian and Tibetan authors. In his dissertation on Anuyoga and the *Sūtra That Gathers All Intentions*, Dalton details the ways Nyingma authors have used this tantra as a basis for organizing the multiplicity of doxographic systems that developed and as a basis for large-scale rituals.[12] Space prevents us from summarizing his extensive findings here. It should suffice to say that the founder of

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[11] This was edition was edited by the late abbot of Katok Jamyang Gyeltsen

[12] Ibid.

Katok wrote numerous commentaries on the *Sūtra*.[13] Furthermore later Katok lamas were major figures in the evolution of the liturgical traditions of the *Sūtra*.

Early in its history the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* served the Nyingma School as a vehicle for systematic thought and scholastic study, including at Katok. Nevertheless, the primary and abiding tantric venue for scholastic reflection and monastic education has been the *Secret Nucleus*, the Mahāyoga tantra. For instance, the most recent edition of the Nyingma Kama as a literary compilation contains over sixteen volumes dev oted to commentaries on the Secret Nucleus and another ten volumes of commentaries devoted to other tantras of the same Mayājāla class.[14] In this dissertation, it will be shown that when scholastic study of the Kama was revived at Katok in the late eighteen th century, the sources show it to have been almost entirely focused on the *Secret Nucleus*. Cantwell and Mayer confirm that this is still the case, claiming "among the many NGB [*Collected Tantras of the Nyingmapa*] texts, only the *Guhyagarbha* tantra nowaday s survives as a specific text for classroom study, with its own living commentarial tradition."[15]

The Atiyoga vehicle is concerned with the meditation system known as Dzokchen (*rdzogs chen*) or the Great Perfection. Its root tantra the *All-Accomplishing King* is invoked on occasion in the primary materials cited in this dissertation, but

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[13] Ibid., Chapter Two.

[14] The commentaries on the *Secret Nucleus* tantra span volumes 63 through 79 and include at least 35 individual titles. The *Secret Nucleus* is one of many tantras in the *Mayājāla* class. Other *Mayājāla* tantras have also inspired volumes of commentaries by Indian and Tibetan authors. These are also collected in the *Greatly Expanded Kama* and found in volumes 80 through 89. There are 6 volumes of *Mayājāla* liturgies as well (vols. 13-18).

[15] Cantwell and Mayer, The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra, 2.

during the historical period covered the main Dzokchen teachings at Katok were not based directly on this tantra.

The founder of Katok Monastery, Dampa Deshek (*dam pa bde gshegs*, 1122-1192), studied the Kama under Zur lamas.[16] Dampa Deshek's primary Nyingma lama was Dzamtön Drogön (*'dzam ston 'gro mgon*), a student of Zur Shakya Senge. Over a nearly ten-year period spanning the 1140s and early 50s Dampa studied the Kama with Dzamtön Drogön and a few other Nyingma lamas. After completing his training and receiving a prophetic order to establish a monastery on the site of a geographic formation resembling the letter Ka, Dampa established the Zur lines of explanation and practice at his monastery in eastern Tibet.

At Katok, the Kama came to be strongly associated with the two institutional trends of monasticism and scholastic study. This is not to say that the Kama necessitates monasticism or formal scholastic study, only that at Katok the three went together as the core components of its ideal or self-image. As for monasticism, at Katok the conservatism of a commentarial and liturgical tradition constrained by a relatively closed canon of source texts is matched by adherence to the conservative moral code of the monk's Discipline (*vinaya*). Dampa Deshek was a fully ordained monk and Katok was one of the first centers of celibate monasticism in the Nyingma School and in eastern Tibet. Dampa set the model for life at Katok in which study

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[16] This paragraph is based on the earliest biography of Dampa Deshek, authored by his student Bhikśu Dingpopa (dge slong lding po pa), *Biography of Dampa Deshek* (shar kaH thog pa dam pa bde gshegs pa'i rnam thar bdus pa grub mchog rjes dran).

and practice of the Kama occurred within a context regulated by the monk's discipline of celibacy and monastic decorum.

The second institutional feature associated with the Katok tradition of the Kama is scholastic study. Scholastic study here means the teaching of highly technical commentarial literature in an academic environment. At early Katok, the Nyingma tantras and other topics were taught twice yearly during seasonal periods of study and practice. The summer sessions were called "commentarial schools" (*bshad grwa*) and the winter sessions were called "practice schools" (*sgrub grwa*).[17] As with the connections between the Kama and monasticism, to uphold the Kama tradition does not necessitate studying its commentarial corpus in such a formal institutional setting. A community could instead maintain the Kama in a purely ritualistic way. Nevertheless, for the Katok founder Dampa Deshek, the Kama was an academic tradition as much as it was a tradition of practice and ritual. During the later period covered in this dissertation, the Kama is always spoken of in terms of both the rituals and their formal study, which includes philosophical exegesis.

In summary, the Kama at Katok refers to the study and ritual practice of the three inner tantras in an institutional setting where monastic purity and scholasticism were core elements of the monastery's identity and self-representation. Proof that this constellation of elements was chief to Katok's image long after its founding is the following quote about the monastery in the sixteenth century classic of Tibetan

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[17] See Gelong Dingpopa, *Biography of Dampa Deshek*, 17b.4-18a.4, for an account of the locations, schedules, and courses of study at these two schools.

history, *Scholar's Feast of Doctrinal History* (*chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*), composed by a Kagyü lama four centuries after Katok was founded. The profile of Katok appears at the end of the section on the Kama and is the only Nyingma monastery profiled in that section. The final statement on the monastery reads,[18]

> As for (the tradition of) these Katok (lamas), because they primarily practiced the morality of the *Vinayavastu*, the monastery was kept clean and pure; because they propagated the conduct class (of scriptures), such as the *Bodhicāryavatāra*, they rectified (the study of) texts about the Mahāyāna path; and they propagated all of the (teachings of) mantra and dialectics and in particular the main teaching of the *Triad of Sūtra, Illusion,* and *Mind* abide here (at Katok).

Dampa Deshek would have been happy to know that even at this late date Katok Monastery was still thought of in some circles as equally devoted to the Vinaya and the *Kama Triad of Sūtra, Illusion,* and *Mind*.

The Treasures (Terma): Revelations of Lay Visionaries

Kama is contrasted and complimented by Terma, or Treasures. Treasures are materials – text, image, or artifact – that are made present to the world through processes of purported excavation or revelation by visionaries. Revealed teachings

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[18] Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa, Scholar's Feast, (630.7): ka thog pa 'di rnams ni gzhi 'dul ba'i tshul khrims gtso bor mdzad pas dgon pa gtsang zhing dag/ spyod 'jug sogs spyod phyogs dar bas theg chen gyi lam gyi gzhung bsrongs/ sngags mtshan nyid mtha' dag dar zhing khyad par mdo sgyu sems gsum gyi bstan pa dngos gzhi 'dir gnas pa yin no/ spyir zur che chung las 'phros pa'i sngags pas bod khams gang zhing bshad nyan shin tu dar bas sngon bod tu mdo sgyu sems gsum las dar ba'i chos ma byung ba snyam ste.

and objects are found to varying degrees in all sects of Tibetan Buddhism but are associated primarily with the Nyingma and Bön schools. As such, Treasures have played an important role in the history of Katok Monastery. This section will introduce aspects of the Treasure tradition that are pertinent to the period of Katok history covered by this dissertation.

The best evidence at present dates the treasure tradition to the early eleventh century for the Bön tradition and the later eleventh century for the Buddhists.[19] By the eleventh century, Tibetan society had regained some of the economic vitality and evolving stability that was lost during the so-called dark ages (*sangs rgyas bstan pa dar nub*) of the ninth and tenth centuries following the collapse of the imperial period and thus institutional religious activity was on the increase. Nevertheless, the Yarlung Dynasty was not restored and during this time there was no political centralization in Tibet. Instead, the political landscape was dotted with many small estates, including many with ties to the fallen dynasty. Tibetans at this time had a strong nostalgia for the "better days" of the dynasty, the ruined splendor of which surrounded them in the form of temples, tombs, and other architectural remains.

During the rapid decline of the dynasty in the middle of the ninth century, objects of great material value or spiritual potency were hidden for safekeeping. During the subsequent century of greatly decreased importation of Buddhism (the dark age) and through the early Tibetan Renaissance, these remnants of Tibet's

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[19] Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance,* 225. This chronology is not meant to imply Buddhist derivation from an originally Bön cult of Treasures.

former age of glory were often unearthed. Davidson links the treasure cult with such discoveries of materials from the Yarlung dynasty. He writes, "There can be little doubt that the phenomenon of treasure texts (Terma) is closely connected with material remains of the Tibetan imperium, the artifacts and hoards of precious materials that flowed into imperial sites as tribute and booty during the two centuries of adventurism and that remained after its fall."[20] Dan Martin also explains the Treasure tradition to be at root about the "revelation" of ancient and hallowed objects. "The *gter-ma* phenomenon is most generally a cult of relics combined with the romance of discovery. (It should be noted that this opening statement says nothing about writings or books.) It has, by its own account, roots in Buddhism, both *sūtra* and *tantra*, but it is a religious tradition with an especially strong stake in archeological revelation."[21]

Included among the finds were translations of esoteric Buddhist texts, some of whose circulation among the populace was forbidden by the kings. Nyingma masters of the eleventh century and later also utilized this trope of rediscovered tantric texts and other religious objects from the ruins of the Tibetan empire as a vehicle for "self-authentication" and "the appropriation of new Indic material and the means for the development of a vision of indigenous Tibetan religiosity."[22] From the eleventh century onwards, many "Treasure discoverers" (Tertön; *gter ston*) produced a variety

[20] Ibid., 213.

[21] Martin, Unearthing Bön Treasures, 19.

[22] Davidson, Tibetan Renaissance, 216.

of materials that they claimed were excavated from the earth, buildings, or their own mind streams. The earliest known taxonomy of treasures identifies two broad types of treasures, wealth treasures and Dharma treasures.[23] The former type includes jewelry, vases, foreign objects, and the like, while the latter includes texts. This dissertation, is primarily concerned with textual Dharma treasures and the institutional characteristics of the types of communities devoted to a treasure revealer and his or her revelations, especially as they relate to Katok Monastery.

The types of literature found in treasure collections cover a range of genres that is fairly standard. Gyatso divides the content of treasure cycles into "(1) the 'historical,' which in the Buddhist case concerns the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet during the Yar lung dynasty, and (2) religious doctrine and practice."[24] The latter type of Treasure literature predominates, especially ritual manuals. Dozens of genres of ritual are found in Treasure cycles, the range of which Gyatso describes in the following:[25]

> construction of maṇḍalas; manufacture of ritual hats and costumes; geomantical analysis of a place for its spiritual properties (*sa dpyad*); rituals to appease the human and non-human "owners" of a place in which one intends to practice (*sa chog*); methods to ascertain the disposition of the large being that constitutes the entirety of a place (*sa*

[23] Ibid., 213.

[24] Gyatso, "Drawn from the Tibetan Treasury: The *gTer ma* Literature," 155.

[25] Ibid., 159.

bdag lto 'phye); invocation of blessings (*byin 'bebs*); general meritorious rituals performed between more complex rituals (*chos spyod*); additional rituals to compensate for ritual transgressions (*bskang bzhags*); techniques for eating bits of paper inscribed with therapeutic mantra letters (*za yig sngags 'bum*); construction of offering cakes (*gtor ma*); mass offering-feast liturgies (*tshogs mchod*); consecration of icons (*rab gnas*); rites for the dead; burnt juniper offerings (*bsang*); construction of thread-crosses (*mdos*); uses of effigies (*glud*); crop cultivation; weather control; turning back of armies; protective devices against weapons; curing of physiological and psychological disease; extending of lifespan (*tshe sgrub*).

Davidson, as well as Cantwell and Mayer, have commented on the early symbiosis of Kama and Terma literature. Speaking from the point of view of what the Treasures offered to the Kama communities, Davidson writes, "One of Terma's most important purposes was to authenticate the great proliferation of Nyingma tantras (Kahma) from the tenth to the twelfth century."[26] Cantwell and Mayer consider the relationship from the other angle and make the compelling claim that, "in a very broad sense, [the Nyingma tantras of the Kama (NGB)] serve as the measure and model for new *gter ma* revelation, which in general should not deviate too much from the NGB in style and contents."[27] Davidson even documents how

[26] Davidson, Tibetan Renaissance, 228.

[27] Cantwell and Mayer, The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and The Vajra Wrath Tantra, 1.

fluid the distinctions between Kama and Terma could be in the early period, with certain bodies of Great Perfection treasures eventually being reclassified as Kama.[28]

The earliest treasure revealers who became recognized as the exemplars of the tradition and set the trend for later treasure discoverers were not monks but non-celibate tantrists. Such lions of the tradition include lay figures such as Nyangrel Nyima Özer, Guru Chökyi Wangchuk, Rindzin Gökyi Dentruchen, and Pema Lingpa.[29] There are some monastic exceptions to this pattern, such as the monk treasure revealers Ngari Penchen (*mnga' ris paN chen*; 1487 -1542) and Jatsön Nyingpo (*'ja' tshon snying po*; 1585-1656). One reason for the predominance of lay treasure revealers is the understanding that the sexual yogas of the fulfillment stage (*rdzogs rim*) are a necessary part of the revelation process.[30] Gyatso sums up the connection between the practice and the lay character of most tertöns by saying, "Treasure discovery is thought to require fulfillment yoga with an actual partner, and with few exceptions, all discoverers (who in large percentage were male) are said to have had recourse to a (female) consort at critical points in their careers."[31]

The treasure cult, therefore, was the domain of figures that were dissimilar from the founding fathers of Katok Monastery. The latter were scholar monks who

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[28] Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance,* 228-229.

[29] *Myang ral nyi ma 'od zer* (1136-1205), *gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug* (1212-1270), *rgod kyi ldem* 'phru *can* (1337-1409), and *pad+ma ling pa* (1450-1521). See the biographical sketches of them in Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*.

[30] It can be argued that the more central issues behind the non-celibate character of the treasure communities lie in the tensions between monastic institutions and a perpetually expanding canon

[31] Gyatso, Apparitions of the Self, 255.

lived in celibate communities. Scholar monks accrued their stature through monastic purity and scholarship, in addition to meditative proficiency. Furthermore, the texts they produced were highly complex scholastic treatises modeled on the Indian śāstras. Their model of succession was often meritocratic, with leadership of the monastery passing from one elite scholar to another. Treasure revealers, on the other hand, are famous for different types of mastery and produce very different types of texts, and for different audiences, while succession tends to be biological.

The biography of the founder of Katok Monastery Dampa Deshek does not recount him having any involvement with the burgeoning Terma movement in Central Tibet in the early twelfth century. There is no need to assume that Dampa Deshek actively avoided the Treasures. He simply seems to have not entered into their orbit, instead hewing closely to communities of scholars and yogis that were committed to celibacy, scholarship, and scriptures purportedly translated from Indic languages. If the founder of Katok was uninvolved in the treasures, then how and when did the first encounter between early Katok lamas and the Treasure tradition transpire? The early nineteenth century Nyingma classic *Guru Trashi's History* records a very charged meeting between the seventh Katok abbot Mani Rinchen (*ma Ni rin chen*; thirteenth cent.) and the major Buddhist treasure revealer, Guru Chökyi Wangchuk (Chöwang).[32] Guru Chowang styled himself as the reincarnation of the first great treasure revealer, Nyangrel Nyima Özer (d. 1192), and furthered his

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[32] Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History*, 313. Jamyang Gyeltsen, *Brief History of Katok*, 41-42, also covers this event.

predecessor's treasure discoveries. Guru Chöwang is best known in Tibetan and western scholarship for his contributions to the Mani Kambum (*ma Ni bka' 'bum*) treasure cycle about the Mahākarunika-Avalokiteśvara and the sacrality of the Tibetan land and imperium.[33] In all, he discovered nineteen treasure cycles including a major installment of the *Eight Transmitted Precepts* (*bka' brgyad*).[34] He was very famous even during his own lifetime and attracted students from all over Tibet to study with him.

Mani Rinchen was a student of Jampabum (*byams pa 'bum;* 1179-1252), the third abbot of Katok following the founders Dampa Deshek and Dorjé Gyeltsen. *Guru Trashi's History* does not say which level of ordination he maintained but it is known that full ordination was still actively given at Katok at this time. For example, Jampabum is best known to Tibetan history for being the ordination master for the second Karmapa's full ordination, which took place while the latter was training at Katok during his youth.[35] Jampabum appears to have been intrigued by the popularity around Guru Chöwang and his treasures, and thus sent Mani Rinchen to go to Lhodrak (*lho brag*) in southern Tibet to study with him. Mani Rinchen went and became a close member of Guru Chöwang's inner circle. Nevertheless, the relationship broke down when the treasure revealer ordered the Katok monk to take

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[33] Kapstein, "Remarks on the Maṇi bKa'-'bum and the cult of Avalokitesvara in Tibet," and Phillips, "Consummation and Compassion in Medieval Tibet: The 'Maṇi bka'-'bum chen-mo' of Guru Chos-kyi dbang-phyug."

[34] So far no comprehensive collection of his extant treasures has been published.

[35] Kapstein, Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism, 99.

on the non-celibate lifestyle of a lay yogi. *Guru Trashi's History* records this event in some detail. Regardless of whether the interaction really happened as described, for the purposes of this dissertation the import of the account lies in the fact that in the post -Longsel age Katok historiography still maintained (or newly created?) a story that represents a degree of incompatibility between the treasure communities and Kama-based monastic communities. *Guru Trashi's History* reports,[36]

> *Siddha* Mani Rinchen was identified as the chief treasure master of Guru Chökyi Wangchuk's *Gathering of the Further Heart of the Great Compassioate One*. [Guru Chöwang then] prescribed (*lung bstan mdzad*) that his daughter Kundrölbum (*kun grol 'bum*) [and Mani Rinchen] practice tantra together at Katok Monastery. Nevertheless Mani Rinchen would not transgress the ascetic discipline of monkhood and therefore the auspicious connections (between guru and disciple) suffered slightly. (Mani Rinchen subsequently returned to Katok) and immediately after completing his service of constructing a reliquary (*gdung 'bum*) for the three patriarchs (of the monastery), right there (at the reliquaries) he used his lama's robes as wings and flew like a bird, alighting on the peak of the far mountain. There is even a footprint there (which he left upon impact).

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[36] Ngawang Lodrö, Guru Trashi's History, 313: grub thob ma Ni rin chen gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug gi thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa'i rtsa ba'i chos kyi bdag por ngos bzung zhing khong nyid kyi sras mo kun grol 'bum dang lhan gcig kaH thog tu sngags kyi lung bstan mdzad kyang ma Ni rin chen rab byung gi brtul zhugs ma 'das pas rten 'brel cung zad 'phyugs/ 'on kyang gong ma rnam gsum gyi gdung 'bum sogs kyi zhabs tog mdzad pa'i las zin ma thag de nyid du bla gos gshog pa ltar mdzad nas nam mkha' la bya ba bzhin 'phur nas phar ka'i ri rtser bab/ der zhabs rjes kyang yod.

As asserted before, the lack of treasures in the program of early Katok was likely due not to a conscious rejection of that new cult, but instead due to a lack of exposure to them on the part of the monastery's founder. However by the early thirteenth century, the lamas at Katok, who trained entirely in eastern Tibet, apparently became interested in the burgeoning treasure cults in southern and central Tibet and wanted to experiment with their new liturgies and contemplative methods. Indeed, later Katok lamas did incorporate numerous treasure texts into the religious program at the monastery. As the story makes perfectly clear, however, the leaders of Katok could participate in the treasure traditions only to a point. The Katok lamas drew a line in the sand in terms of practicing sexual yogas at Katok, and by extension, to hereditary rule at the monastery. Guru Chöwang's prescription that his daughter and Mani Rinchen "practice tantra" – i.e., the sexual yogas of the fulfillment stage – at Katok were obviously viewed as a violation of the strict monasticism that had always characterized the monastery. Guru Chöwang's actions were also objectionable to the Katok lamas who created this story because bringing the female lama to Katok would have led to a change in the leadership of the monastery. Whereas the previous lines of succession followed from scholar to scholar, if Mani Rinchen had brought the daughter of a prominent treasure revealer to Katok, it would create the risk that their children might have set themselves up as the heirs to the throne, thereby displacing the scholar monks. Thus to the detriment of Mani Rinchen's relationship to his treasure teacher, he had to refuse the order because of its potential to fundamentally alter Katok as an institution.

Mani Rinchen returned to Katok with his vows intact and the next thing he is reported to have done is honor the memory of the foundering patriarchs – and by extension, their vision for Katok – by enshrining the relics of the first three abbots in a complex of stūpas at the monastery.[37] Furthermore, Mani Rinchen is portrayed as a *mahāsiddha* who could fly through the air. None of the previous lamas at Katok is represented in *Guru Trashi's History* as having this ability. Perhaps the reason for Mani Rinchen, of all people, having this power is that the tradition felt compelled to show that even though he foreswore the advanced sexual yogas, he still had great meditative accomplishments. In conclusion, this story demonstrates that at some point in its history the lamas of the monastery considered the possibility of adopting the emerging institutional practices of the treasure communities. Ultimately they decided against it and the dominant ethical modality of the monastery remained that of the scholar monk inclined towards Kama traditions rather than the non-celibate, visionary tantrist with their practices of new revelations or Terma

The recent *Brief History of Katok* concludes its account of the encounter between Mani Rinchen and Guru Chöwang by claiming that Mani Rinchen did not sever ties with his guru's treasures and that he in fact propagated them at Katok.[38] Regardless of the truth of that, there is no question that other treasures did find their ways into prominent roles in Katok's liturgical, contemplative, and even scholastic

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[37] This memorial came to be known as Kumbum Ringmo (*sku 'bum ring mo*). The renovation of these stūpas is a major topic in Chapter Two of this dissertation. The three lamas whose relics are entombed in the stūpas are Dampa Deshek, Dorjé Gyeltsen, and Mani Rinchen's teacher Jampabum.

[38] Jamyang Gyeltsen, 42.

programs. Yet, even though the monastery eventually became very involved in the treasures, there is no record of a non-celibate treasure revealer taking the throne at Katok and changing the institutional character of the monastery from monastic to lay tantrist. This never happened, that is, until the arrival of treasure revealer Longsel Nyingpo at Katok in the middle of the seventeenth century. This began two centuries of transformation at Katok Monastery as the new treasure traditions engaged in a complex interplay with the older kama traditions against the backdrop of changing political, intellectual, and religious changes that were sweeping across Nyingma monasteries in Eastern Tibet. It is these changes which the present dissertation documents and analyzes.

Chapter Summaries

This dissertation sets out to address key questions in the study of Tibetan institutional religion and the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism. What is the history of Nyingma monasticism, especially given its early tendency towards lay leaders and communities? How did the Kama and Terma – and their associated literary, ritual, and social dimensions – relate to each other, especially within monastic institutions? What are the origins of Nyingma scholasticism? When and how did reincarnate lamas gain their current high status in Nyingma monasteries? What are the origins of the renowned monasteries of Dege? What were the relations between the royal court of Dege and the local Nyingma monasteries? This study addresses these questions through a detailed case study of Katok Monastery during a

period of turbulent transformations from the 1640s to 1829. Katok is ideal for such an inquiry because of its long history with monasticism, complicated relationship with Terma traditions, and intimate connections with the Degé Kingdom.

Chapter One analyzes the first stirrings of crisis at Katok mentioned earlier in the Introduction. The chapter begins with an overview of the political history of the region in which Katok Monastery is situated and an account of the founding of the Degé kingdom in the mid -seventeenth century. The seventeenth century was a vibrant time for Nyingma lamas and institutions in Kham. This is followed by a brief account of the rise of the Drung lamas at Katok, which represents the last major change to occur at Katok before the period focused on by this study. The Drung lamas were a line of monks that ruled Katok in the sixteenth and early seventeen centuries and who passed succession from uncle to nephew. The chapter moves on to introduce the key Nyingma lamas of the period, especially the treasure revealer Dündül Dorjé (1615 -1672). This lama hailed from Degé and was an influential teacher. Dündül Dorjé taught and inspired several of the most important Nyingma lamas of late seventeenth century Degé. His most important student was Longsel Nyingpo (1625-1692), the great treasure revealer and court chaplain of Degé who became the first treasure revealer to sit on the throne at Katok. Longsel Nyingpo was born in Litang and in his twenties trained u nder Dündül Dorjé for a time. After studying under Dündül, Longsel began his own prolific treasure career. Several of his treasures are anthologized in the great nineteenth-century collection of terma, the *Great Collection of Precious Treasure* (Rinchen Ter dzö; *rin chen gter mdzod*).

Longsel Nyingpo also attracted royal patrons including a notorious descendant of Guśri Khan and the Degé royal court.

The second half of Chapter One is devoted to the chief topic of the chapter. Prior to the arrival of Longsel Nyingpo a non-celibate revealer of Treasures had never served as the head of Katok Monastery. With the rise of the Degé kingdom in the late 1630s and early 40s – concurrent with the founding of the Dalai Lama's government in Lhasa, the Ganden Podrang (*dga' ldan pho brang*) – Katok Monastery became subject to a powerful, new regional polity. The new kingdom exerted its control over the monastery by imposing Longsel Nyingpo as the new head lama of Katok. Longsel Nyingpo arrived at Katok with many family members and had an enormous impact on the monastery, especially on the monastery's administration and liturgies. Longsel altered the administration of the monastery by establishing his family members and students at the head of the see. Some of Longsel's successors were lay, some were reincarnated lamas, and most were neither monks nor scholars. Longsel also had an impact on the liturgies and contemplative practices at Katok through instituting the practice and recitation of his treasures. Chapters Three and Four attest to how his treasures became deeply embedded into the religious programs at Katok. An earlier section of this Introduction demonstrated that the Kama has always had a central role at Katok, which raises a question about whether Longsel perceived a need to modify any of his treasures to be complementary with the established Kama traditions. Through an investigation of the single treasure cycle that Longsel discovered at Katok, it is shown that he attempted to make at least some

of his treasures compatible with the Kama. Even though Longsel tried to bridge the divide between his treasures and the Kama, the rise of his treasures at Katok still displaced the Kama to a significant degree for over a century at the monastery.

Chapter Two explores the first documented criticism and resistance to the changes wrought at Katok by Longsel Nyingpo and his successors. This chapter furthers the investigation of the nature and relations of Kama and Terma in an institutional setting through giving voice to a prominent opponent of these developments. The primary source for this study is the *Collected Letters* of Katok Rindzin Tsewang Norbu (1698-1755). Tsewang Norbu is highly regarded by Tibetan and western scholars for his excellent historical writings and defense of rare and embattled sects. In his youth, Tsewang Norbu was recognized as the reincarnation of a student of Longsel Nyingpo and he was raised in a milieu dominated by the treasure traditions of Dündül Dorjé, Longsel Nyingpo, and their descendants. In his early twenties, Tsewang Norbu was offered the throne at Katok, but declined and instead left Kham for Central Tibet and the Himalayas, never to return. Tsewang Norbu became very active in the Karma Kagyü sect in the 1730s and 1740s and during this time maintained little, if any, connection with Katok. Then in the early 1750s Tsewang Norbu developed a strong concern for the present state of Katok. He sent letters to the Dalai Lama, the king of Degé, and local lamas in which he criticized Longsel's descendants and argues for the revival of the Kama and celibate monasticism. Tsewang Norbu singles out the reincarnation of Lo ngsel Nyingpo's son, Drimé Zhingkyong (d. 1786), for the most severe censure. Drimé Zhingkyong

was the first reincarnation of a former leader of Katok (as opposed to just an affiliated lama) to head the monastery. His father was an associate of Longsel Nyingpo and he was raised by the last members of Longsel Nyingpo's biological family to run Katok. Tsewang Norbu portrays him as a corrupt and neglectful lama who is responsible for the decrepit condition of the temples at Katok during his reign. Tsewang Norb u also makes the broader point that the problems currently plaguing the monastery were structural: abandoning monasticism, the study of the Kama, and meritocratic succession leads to poor management and thus the overall degradation of the monastery. Althou gh many of his judgments on the Longsel period are overstated or incorrect, they do provide the reader with a window onto how some Tibetan lamas perceived the differences between the Kama and Terma, and how they reacted to the rise of reincarnated lamas and new treasure traditions at Katok.

In Chapter Two Tsewang Norbu painted a very bleak picture of Katok Monastery in the middle of the eighteenth century. Chapter Three reassesses this period through the lens of other sources to produce a contrasting image of great dynamism in Degé, Katok included. The first half of the chapter covers several burgeoning trends in Degé religion that were adopted by Katok:, i.e., reincarnated lamas, classical learning, and celibate monasticism. By the mid -eighteenth century the reincarnations of Longsel Nyingpo’s relatives and students had completely eclipsed Longsel’s blood descendants at Katok. This chapter inquires into the social and religious forces favoring rule by reincarnation at Katok and the other Nyingma

monasteries in Degé. This topic is followed by a discussion of the rise of classical learning and printing at Katok in mid eighteenth -century Degé. Section three analyzes a monastic revival that swept through the Kagyü and Nyingma monasteries in Degé in the middle of the eighteenth century as spearheaded by Situ Penchen (1700-1774). Situ was a Karma Kagyü lama (the sect with which Tsewang Norbu was deeply involved) from Degé and one of the greatest translators, editors, and artists of later Tibetan history. Apart from his scholarship and duties to the Degé royal court and the Karma Kagyü School, Situ was also an ardent promoter of monasticism at regional religious institutions, giving novice and full ordination to hundreds of monks over his long career as a lama. Surprisingly, it is learned in this chapter that Drimé Zhingkyong – who was libeled by Tsewang Norbu – was actually one of Situ Penchen's ordinands. Drimé Zhingkyong took full-ordination under Situ Penchen in a move that marked the gradual return of widespread celibate monasticism at Katok after many decades of decline.

The second half of the chapter focuses on more local concerns and charts the continued ascendancy of Longsel Nyingpo's treasures at Katok. This is carried out through a close study of the early years of Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita (1761-1829), the most influential lama at Katok in all of the eighteenth century. Getsé was a reincarnated lama of the second generation of trülku leaders at Katok, and was trained by Drimé Zhingkyong and his fellow reincarnated lamas. This profile of his training at Katok in the 1770s and 1780s serves as a window onto the religious and administrative programs at Katok one hundred years after Longsel Nyingpo. An examination of

Getsé's early years indicate that Longsel Nyingpo's treasures had become the core of Katok's contemplative and ritual agendas, while Kama commentaries and rituals composed by earlier Katok lamas were no longer being taught at Katok. In addition, some new Kama liturgies from Central Tibet were circulating at K atok, and reincarnated lamas dominated the administration of the monastery.

Chapter Four, the final chapter, analyzes the resolution to the religious and administrative crisis that ensued upon Longsel Nyingpo's dominance at Katok in the late seventeenth ce ntury. In the century following the introduction of Longsel Nyingpo's treasures, the Kama never regained a prominent place at Katok, even though the Kama had been central to Katok's self image for many centuries. But beginning in the 1790s, Getsé was able to both revive the Kama *and* reformulate the liturgical, academic, and contemplative programs at Katok such that the Kama and Terma now enjoyed equal prominence. Getsé accomplished this by importing a new system of Kama from Mindrölling Monastery near Lhasa , and revising some of Longsel's treasures so that they were more suitable for widespread usage in a large monastic setting. The chapter first chronicles Getsé's revival of the Kama through the wholesale importation of a new system of Kama rituals and tant ric commentaries. The second part of the chapter explores Getsé's revision of Longsel's treasures. Getsé reworked many of Longsel's major rituals by writing liturgies that conform to standard large-scale monastic rites. He also wrote a long manual for one of Longsel's Dzokchen treasures. In both cases, Getsé was able to preserve the centrality of

Longsel Nyingpo's tradition at Katok while repackaging this material so that it was fully compatible with the instituitonal needs of Katok.

Prior to Longsel's time the Kama was the crown jewel of the Katok tradition. Katok lamas also maintained select treasure traditions, but they originated outside the monastery and adoption of them did not involve becoming a non-celibate monastery, or having the treasures displac e the role of Kama as the primary focus of the monastery (at least at the level of self-representation). Getsé turned this arrangement on its head. His resolution to the crisis unleashed by Longsel's arrival at the monastery – i.e., how to reestablish the Kama in some meaningful way at Katok in the post -Longsel age – was to present the Longsel treasures the unique Katok heritage, and introduce a new Kama system that was shared by other monasteries. Thus whereas the treasures used to be that element of the overall religious program at Katok which kept the monastery in touch with broader trends in the sect while their system of the Kama was something unique to the monastery, Getsé reformulated the monastery so that the reverse was now the case.

Chapter One: A Treasure Revealer Arrives at Katok

Katok Monastery underwent sweeping changes in the seventeenth century. During this hundred-year span new local political institutions and monastery leaders profoundly altered the economics, liturgies, and administration of Katok. The two primary dynamics behind these transformations were Longsel Nyingpo's efforts to reshape the monastery and the advent of the Degé kingdom in the mid-seventeenth century. The first section of this chapter discusses the early history of the region and the dramatic rise of Degé in the 1630s and 40s and its patronage of Nyingma monasteries. The second section covers several seventeenth century lamas in Kham who were active in the broader Nyingma religious field of the time and associated with Katok. Against this backdrop, the third section of the chapter turns to a detailed analysis of treasure revealer Longsel Nyingpo's impact on Katok Monastery. In the late seventeenth century Longsel Nyingpo introduced his treasure traditions at Katok and instituted a new administration in the place of a previously reigning line of lamas. This analysis surveys Longsel's political alliance with Degé, his strategies for instituting his treasures at Katok, and his administrative reforms at the monastery.

The Rise of Degé

The Early History of Kham

The early seventh-century rise of the Pugyel (*spu rgyal*) dynasty in the Yarlung (*yar klung*) valley of central Tibet produced unprecedented political unity for the Tibetan people. The Pugyel dynasty grew into an empire that extended its economic and military strength northward and eastward. To the north the Tibetans became an important force along the Silk Road of Central Asia. To the east, in what is now Qinghai, Gansu, and Sichuan provinces, Tibetan army garrisons settled in many areas along the edge of the Tibetan plateau. With their arrival came Tibetan language, culture, and religion from Central Tibet, and the interaction with regional languages and cultures produced the distinctive but highly diverse Tibetan cultural region that came to characterize the plateau from the imperial period onwards. Natural features of eastern Tibet's geography divide it roughly into northern and southern areas. The northern region, around the great Blue Lake (*mtsho sngon po;* also known as Lake Kokonor and Qinghai Lake) and the upper reaches of the Ma River (*rma chu*; China's Yellow River, Huang He) is called Amdo (*a mdo*).[39] To the south, Kham "consists primarily of the four valleys of four great rivers, the Ngül River ([*rngul chu*] Salween), Dza River ([*rdza chu*] Mekong), Dri River ([*'bri chu*] Yangtze), and Nya River ([*nyag chu*] Yalung, a tributary of the Yangtze) along with

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[39] This description based on Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, 87.

their various tributaries and the high pasture ground" between them.[40] After the contraction and eventual dissolution of the Tibetan empire in the middle of the ninth century, Tibetan communities remained in these two outlying regions. Amdo and Kham eventually became home to over half of the Tibetan population and to cultural centers equal in influence and prestige to central Tibet.

Contemporary Tibetan scholar of Kham Karma Gyeltsen (*kar+ma rgyal mtshan*) recently wrote that the word kham (*khams*) can mean frontier. "This term kham has many meanings but in this context 'kham' means the march of a country (*yul mtha'*). In this way a principality on the marches is called a principality on the frontier (kham)."[41] Thus the Tibetan region of Kham is named as such because it is on the "frontier" of Greater Tibet (*bod chen*), bordering China and various other polities. The Tibetan imperial period ended in the early 840s, and was succeeded by approximately one century of economic decline and social fragmentation. These two periods were followed by the so -called Tibetan renaissance (mid -tenth to mid - thirteenth centuries), which was character ized by the rise to prominence of new monastic lineages and clan -controlled temple networks.[42] Monks from Kham and Amdo participated in this rebirth of Tibetan culture in Central Tibet, and its new institutions and modes of praxis in turn spread back to eas tern Tibet. Katok

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[40] Ibid., 65-66.

[41] Gyaltsen, Compilation of Pilgrimage Guides to Kham (mdo khams gnas yig phyogs bsgrig), 430; khams zhes pa'i tha snyad 'di la go don mang tsam yod pa yin la/ 'dir gleng ba'i khams zhes pa ni/ yul mtha'i don te mtha'i rgyal phran la khams kyi rgyal phran du 'bod pa ltar ro. Yudru Tsomu, "Local Aspirations and National Constraints," 31-32, makes this same point with a citation from Gendun Chömpel's (dge 'dun chos 'phel; 1903-1951) White Annals (deb ther dkar po).

[42] Davidson, Tibetan Renaissance.

Monastery, founded in 1159 by a monk from Kham who studied in Central Tibet, is a representative example of this process. The Tibetan renaissance was itself followed by the Mongol period, corresponding to the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368).

The Mongol-controlled Yuan dynasty enveloped Tibet within its sphere of power. Yuan power expressed itself in Kham in at least two ways. For one, Mongolians imposed their administrative and trade infrastructure deep into Kham, primarily in the southern and northeastern regions. Petech states that "Mongol influence penetrated deeper into Kham than Amdo, at least along the great trade route from Ch'eng-tu to Ta-chien-lu [Tib. *dar rtse mdo*], Li-thang and Ba-thang."[43] Regular garrisons were permanently stationed in some Kham territories beginning in 1267 and "Li-thang was organized as a circuit (*lu*) in 1278."[44] The economic and political ties between the Yuan dynasty and several regions within Kham represent a significant alteration to Kham society.

The second way the Yuan dynasty impacted Kham was through the establishment of Sakya (*sa skya*) polities and monasteries throughout the region. These new institutions were aligned with the Sakya government in Tsang (*gtsang*), which was established by the imperial preceptor to the Yuan dynasty Pakpa Lodrö Gyeltsen (*'phags pa blo gros rgyal mtshan*; 1235-1280). In the Tibetan and Chinese sources pertaining to thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth-century Kham, two polities

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[43] Petech, "sTon-tshul: The Rise of Sa-skya Paramountcy in Khams," 372. Ta-chien-lu has been renamed by the Chinese to Kangding; its Tibetan name has been shortened from Dartsendo (*dar rtse mdo*) to Dardo (*dar mdo*).

[44] Ibid.

stand out as being particularly powerful: Lingtsang (*gling tshang*) and Gonjo (*go 'jo, 'go gyo,* etc). This is significant for our study because Degé conquered lands belonging to both of these polities in the middle of the seventeenth century. The leaders of these two polities were Sakya monks who bore the title of "great chief" (*dpon chen*).[45] After the fall of Sakya to Jangchub Gyeltsen (*byang chub rgyal mtshan;* 1302-1364) in the early 1350s,[46] the Sakya polities in Kham continued to thrive. The biographies of the fourth and fifth Karmapas (*kar+ma pa*) make several mentions of dealings with the chiefs of Gonjo and Lingtsang.[47] The relations between the Kham polities of Ling and Gonjo and Ming China were formed during the reign

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[45] Petech, "sTon-tshul: the rise of Sa-skya paramountcy in Khams." Petech has brought to light important biographical details about the founder of the Gonjo state, named Töntsul (*ston tshul*). He was a student of Sakya Paṇḍita (*sa skya paNDi ta kun dga' rgyal mtshan*; 1182-1251) and in 1245 showed hospitality to the scholar and his nephew Pakpa Lodrö Gyeltsen when they were passing through Kham on their first trip to Mongolia. Thus before Töntsul became acquainted with the Sakya hierarchs he was already powerful – to some degree – in Gonjo. In 1274 Pakpa requested Qubilai Khan to elevate Töntsul's status in Kham. The request was granted and Töntsul was given the title governor-general (*spyi'i bdag po*) of Kham. Petech (419) says, "Actually his authority was limited to Zal-mo-sgang (Zalmogang), i.e., the region of Derge and neighboring districts."

Lingtsang was based around what is now Erzhi Township in northwestern Degé County and the main temple associated with the polity was Guzi (*'gu zi*) Monastery. Lingtsang also had administrative centers in Dzongsar (*rdzong* sar) and Cakra (*lcags ra*). The history of Lingtsang is not well documented. The contemporary historian and bibliographer Tashi Tsering, "History of the Gling-tshang Principality of Kham," has done exhaustive research into the genealogy of the Lingtsang royal family and begins his publication on the topic saying that the sources on Lingtsang are scarce and not illuminating. The traditional view holds that the Lingtsang family descends from Gyatsa (*rgya tsha*), the half-brother of Gesar. Tashi Tsering says that is highly doubtful and concludes that we will probably never know the family's origins.

[46] van der Kuijp, "On the Life and Political Career of Ta'i-si-tu Byang-Chub Rgyal-Mtshan (1302-?1364)."

[47] Petech, "Yuan Organization of the Tibetan Border Areas" and Sperling "Ming Ch'eng-tsu and the Monk Officials of Gling-tshang and Gon-gyo;" In December of 1358 the fourth Karmapa Rölpé Dorje (*rol pa'i rdo rje*; 1340-1383) met with the great chief Ling in Den (*'dan*), a Ling stronghold. The fifth Karmapa traveled to Gonjo in 1393 or 1401 and met with its chief.

of Yongle (r. 1402-1424).[48] At least as far as the history of Degé is concerned, the Ling polity maintained – even increased – its regional power until the advent of Degé in the middle of the seventeenth century.

Degé Family history

The family that later founded and ruled the kingdom of Degé claim themselves to descend from the Gar (*'gar, mgar*) clan, a sub-line of the Go (*sgo*) clan.[49] The first generation of this family was composed of the Gar brothers Yeshé Zangpo (*ye shes bzang po*) and Gar Dampa (*gar dam pa;* also known as Gar Chödingpa; *chos sdings pa*), active in the mid-thirteenth century.

Yeshe Zangpo and Gar Dampa were based in Powo (*spo bo*) around the mid-thirteenth century.[50] The former's son Sönam Rinchen became Pakpa's majordomo (*gsol dpon*) and gained the favor of Qubilai Khan. Later in life he settled in Samar (*sa dmar;* in present day Pelyül [*dpal yul*] County), where he administered a

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[48] Sperling, "Ming Ch'eng-tsu and the Monk Officials of Gling-tshang and Gon-gyo," 78. This emperor – more commonly known as Yongle – needed the cooperation of local leaders in Kham to secure safe access to Tibet of his diplomatic and trade caravans. The first mention in the Ming sources of these great chiefs acting in this capacity is in 1402, while by 1465 the protocol of Ling and Gonjo sending tribute missions to Beijing had been regularized (76).

[49] Van der Kuijp, "Two Early Sources for the History of the House of Sde-dge." This article compares earlier and later genealogies and discovers that the early official histories found in the index volumes to the Kanjur (1733) and Tenjur (1743) trace the family's genealogy only back to Yeshe Zangpo and Gar Dampa. The later Genealogy of the Degé Kingdom (*sde dge rgyal rabs*; 1828) pushes the lineage much further back and identifies the minister Gar Tongtsen of imperial Tibetan fame as one of the family's earliest ancestors.

[50] The primary source for this narrative about the early Degé family and the founding of the kingdom if Kolmaš, *A Genealogy of the Kings of Derge* (including both Kolmaš's introduction and the royal genealogy itself). Powo is sometimes spelled *spu bo* (Puwo) or *spo yul* (Poyül). Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, 21-26; remarks on Powo's lush forests, fine horses, special breed of small pigs, honey, bamboo, and spices. Stein also notes that some versions of the origin myth about the Tibetan people locate the birthplace of the first Tibetans in Powo (28).

monastic community of one -thousand people. Yeshe Zangpo is considered the patriarch of the first generation of the Degé family. Gar Dampa, his younger brother, was a famous Drigung (*'bri gung*) lama who founded Pulung Monastery (*phu lung dgon*).[51]

The middle son of the seventh generation Dechen Sönam Zangpo (*bde chen bsod nams bzang po*) also had a decisive role in the history of the family. When his mother died he moved to Katok to perform funeral services for her. When he was ready to reenter the world his younger brother, a Nyingma lama, "prophesied" (*lung bstan*) that he should move his branch of the family upward (*stod*) from Samar. He followed the orders and settled in Chakra (*lcags ra; lcang ra*). Chakra is less than ten miles south of Degé's county seat.[52] During Dechen Sönam Zangpo's time Chakra was a regional administrative center for the Lingtsang kingdom. Lingtsang controlled Chakra and this new arrival became a minister of the local leader, who was called the Ling chieftain (*gling dpon*). The name Degé also dates to this period. Degé is a contraction of the four abundances (püntsok <u>de</u>zhi; *phun tshogs sde bzhi*) and ten virtues (<u>ge</u>wa chu; *dge ba bcu*).[53]

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[51] Van der Kuijp, "Two Early Sources for the History of the House of Sde-dge," 3-6.

[52] In the modern period the spelling and pronunciation was changed to "Changra;" Changra (*lcang ra*) Township, Changra District (Gongya Xiang, Gongya Qu 龚垭乡龚垭区), Degé County.

[53] The definition of the four abundances in the Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary (1718) is chos nor 'dod thar bcas 'jig rten dang/ 'jig rten las 'das pa'i phun tshogs sde bzhi ste [1] sangs rgyas kyi chos dar ba dang/ [2] nor longs spyod dang ldan pa/ [3] 'dod yon lnga la spyod pa/ [4] chos la brten nas thar pa mya 'das kyi go 'phang 'thob rgyu yod pa bcas so. The ten virtues are covered in nearly every traditional account of Tibetan Buddhism in English.

Dechen Sönam Zangpo's son Botar (*bo thar*) was also a momentous figure in Degé's history. A story about him in the *Index* to the Degé edition of the Tengyur (1743) reports that he had a beautiful daughter who the Ling chieftain of Chakra wanted to marry.[54] The text reports that in exchange for his daughter's hand he asked for all the land he could plow in one day. With his superhuman strength he plowed all the way from Khorlodo (*'khor lo mdo*)[55] in the north to the Nyen valley of Chakra (*lcags ra'i snyan mda'*) in the south.[56] Botar thereby became a minor chief of a fair amount of land within the Chakra Ling chieftain's domain.

After the acquisition of this land Botar moved the family to the Ngul valley (*dngul mda'*). In 1446 he then invited the elderly lama Tangtong Gyalpo (*thang stong rgyal po*), who at the time was in Kham building bridges, and together they founded a temple. Cyrus Stearns summarizes the event as follows:[57]

> The most historically significant of the many monasteries Tangtong Gyalpo founded was probably at Dergé in eastern Tibet. When Tangtong visited Dergé in 1446, the king Potar Trashi Sengé became

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[54] Zhuchen, *Sde dge'i bstan 'gyur dkar chag*, 326.7. This story does not appear in Index to the Degé Kangyur, written a decade earlier. The chapter on the history of Degé in this latter work is much shorter than the corresponding chapter in the Index to the Tengyur, resulting in the omission of many stories and details.

[55] This place must be more or less identical to Khorlodo Township, Khorlodo District (Keluodong Xiang, Keluodong Qu 柯洛洞乡柯洛洞区), Degé County

[56] I am not sure of the precise referent of this valley but it is around Chakra. It cannot be the valley in which the Ling chief's palace sat because the chief did not lose his political dominance to Botar, just some of his land.

[57] Cyrus Stearns, *King of the Empty Plain*, 56-57. Accounts of Thangtong Gyelpo's travels through Kham are found in Chapter Eleven of this book.

> his patron and he became the king's teacher. It is said that he saw that a lake at the foot of the northern mountain in the upper valley of Ngu was inhabited by a powerful nāga spirit. He tamed this spirit and bound it to the vow not to harm people and to create harmonious conditions in the area. Then he magically covered over the lake in a manner reminiscent of the legends in the *Compendium of Maṇis* and laid the foundation for a monastery where the shores had been. When the construction was complete, he performed the rites of the Dharma protector Caturmukha. Because all the conditions necessary for the prosperity of the monastery were accomplished without any effort, as though spontaneously, it was given the name Lhundrup Teng. This center would become perhaps the most important monastery in all of eastern Tibet, and the seat of the Dergé rulers and of the Sakya tradition in Khams.

The temple they founded is what is known today as the Tangtong Temple (*thang stong lha khang*). It is a small temple with room for two rows of approximately six monks.[58] For the next four generations the family seems to have maintained their small power base. However, everything changed dramatically during the family's fourteenth generation, in the second quarter of the seventeenth century.

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[58] Kolmaš, *A Genealogy of the Kings of Derge,* 31 and 88, says that cells for one hundred and eight monks were also constructed for the temple. Such a large assembly of monks would not have fit in the temple and it is doubtful the economy at that time could have supported such a sizable monastic community.

After a century or more of stasis as small-scale local rulers, in the 1630s and 1640s the estate became the dominant political entity in the region. This was accomplished through a combination of skillful military campaigns against its enemies and the good fortune to receive a large gift of land from an outside power. The founding father of Degé was Great Lama (Lachen) Jampa Puntsok (*bla chen byams pa phun tshogs*). Jampa Puntsok is a classic figure in the mold of Tibetan lamas who were also great military men and politicians.[59]

A Genealogy of the Kings of Derge, authored in 1828 by another monk-king, gives the most detailed description of this initial stage of Degé's growth available in any extant work.[60] *The Royal Genealogy* contains a transcription of a text about this early history that originated as an inscription on a mural.[61] This very early document is called a "history of the royal palaces, together with the communities of their subjects" (*pho brang khag dang mi ser bcas kyi byung khungs lo rgyus*).[62] The text recounts how each of the new territories was acquired. In brief, most came into

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[59] The foremost exemplar of this type of lama is the fifth Dalai Lama. Other such militaristic monks include Lama Zhang Tsöndrü Drakpa (*bla ma zhang brtson 'grus grags pa*; 1123-1193) and Changchub Gyeltsen. On the fifth Dalai Lama see Karmay, "The Fifth Dalai Lama and His Reunification of Tibet" and Sperling, "'Orientalism' and Aspects of Violence in the Tibetan Tradition." Lama Zhang's "warlordism" is covered in Martin, "Wrapping Your Own Head," and Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance,* 327-335. Changchub Gyeltsen is treated in great detail by van der Kuijp in "On the life and political career of Ta'i-si-tu Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (1302-?1364)" and van der Kuijp, "Fourteenth Century Tibetan Cultural History 1: Ta'i-si-tu Byang-Chub Rgyal-Mtshan as a Man of Religion."

[60] The author's name was Tsewang Dorjé Rikdzin (*tshe dbang rdo rje rig 'dzin;* b. 1786) and his mother was the controversial queen dowager Tsewang Lhamo (*tshe dbang lha mo*). Her story will be discussed in Chapter Four. In 2009 I will translate this text as part of a postdoctoral fellowship at the at the C.N.R.S. in Paris.

[61], pp. 20.3-21.6.

[62] Kolmaš, *A Genealogy of the Kings of Derge*, 166n.19. The temple upon which the mural appeared was painted over after the death of the author's mother, but he recorded it for posterity in the *Royal Genealogies*.

Degé's orbit either through loss in battle, peaceful surrender, or through the gift of Guśri Khan.[63] Many of these lands, however, were imperfectly integrated into Degé's dominion. In order to quell resistance and gain better control over the communities, subsequent kings had to team up with lamas and religious institutions to bring to heel outlying areas such as Pelyül in southern Degé, which is Katok's neighboring valley.

In its first few decades of existence the fledgling kingdom of Degé took an active interest in Katok Monastery. Because of its long history Katok had significant social and economic ties with its surrounding areas. The first attempt to make alliances with the monastery was brokered by a treasure revealer who was from the area but had been living abroad since before the founding of the kingdom. His name was Dündül Dorjé (*bdud 'dul rdo rje;* 1615-1672) and his saga with the Degé court is the subject of the next section of this chapter.

Dündül Dorjé and the Nyingma Tradition in Mid Seventeenth-Century Kham

Degé supported lamas who revitalized Katok Monastery in the second half of the seventeenth century. The earliest Degé lama to be associated with these

[63] For more on Guśri Khan Tenzin Chögyel (1582-1655) and his role in Tibetan politics in the mid-seventeenth century see Kapstein, *The Tibetans,* 171-172. The list of "eighteen" palaces-cum-administrative seats actually enumerates twenty-one different locales: Méshö (*rme shod*; alt. spelling *mad shod, dmad shod, sman shod*); Péwar (*spe war*; alt. spelling *dpe war, spe bar*); Karndo tsuri (*mkhar mdo tshu ri*; alt. spelling *mkhar sum mdo*); Karndo pari (*mkhar mdo pha ri*); Kusi dénying (*ku si sde rnying*); Kusé désar (*ku se sde gsar*); Nyagshi (*nyag gshis*); Polu (*spo lu*; alt spelling *spo lo, spo le, spo li*); Garjé (*sga rje*); Tsamdo (*tsam mdo*); Öntö Phari (*dbon stod pha ri*); Éna (*e na*); Korlomdo ('khor lo mdo); Rakchab (rag chab); Dzomtok (*'dzom thog*; alt spelling *'dzam thog*); Chakra (*lcags ra*); Rabten (*rab brtan*); Yidlhung (*yid lhung*); Horpo (*hor po*; alt. sp. *hor spo*).

developments at Katok was Dündül Dorjé. Cuevas' succinct description of Dündül's eminence is accurate and bears repeating here at the outset. "Dundul Dorjé was a lama of impressive stature in eastern Tibet during the second half of the seventeenth century. He was well connected to all the major Nyingma monasteries in that region and had cultivated close ties with the rulers of Derge and Ling. In Derge his most influential patron was Jampa Phüntshok."[64]

This section will discuss Dündül Dorjé's role at Katok and his tutelage of many of the chief Nyingma lamas of the later seventeenth century. Dündül's life and teaching career will serve as a lens through which to assess the complexities of seventeenth-century Kham institutional religion, especially the revival of Katok monastery. It will be seen that the seventeenth century was a period of efflorescence during which several treasure revealers who founded important and long la sting traditions flourished in Kham. The main lamas of the day were primarily involved in the treasure cults, with little or no activity directed towards the Kama (*bka' ma*).

Dündül Dorjé[65] was born in 1615[66] in Ngülpu (*dngul phu*) valley, the home base of the Degé family.[67] His natal home is walking distance, up the valley, from the

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[64] Cuevas, *The Hidden History of the Tibetan Book of the Dead*, 187.

[65] The two main sources for Dündul Dorje's life used in this thesis are his Biography and History of Treasure Discoveries (*rig 'dzin grub pa'i dbang phyug bdud 'dul rdo rje'i rnam thar gter 'byung mdor bsdus pa dad pa'i mchod stong*, v. 10, pp. 1-54) written by his student Takrepa Künzang Pema Loden (stag ras pa kun bzang pad+ma blo ldan), and Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History* (*gu ru bkra shis chos 'byung*). The latter contains one long entry on his life (566-571), returns to the topic in the entry on Katok Monastery (752-753), and mentions him several other times in other chapters.

[66] Dudjom Rinpoche, The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, 813, and the Great Tibetan- Chinese Dictionary (bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo), 3263, report that he was born in a wood rabbit year (shing yos, 1615), whereas Dündül's Biography and History of Treasure Discoveries, 12.3, Guru Trashi's History, 566, and Jamyang Gyeltsen's Brief History of Katok, 86, are in agreement that he was born in the fire rabbit year

Lhündrupténg temple and where the Degé royal palace would later be built. He was born into the Ling family line, which at this time still had at least nominal control of the region. His father's name was Lukyap (*klu skyabs*) and he was an expert in Tibetan medicine. Dündül's mother's name was Boluma (*bo lu ma*).

Dündül Dorjé was a mystic prodigy who at an early age is said to have displayed magical powers and seen visions. His parents wanted to make him a monk and took him to a visiting Sakya lama for a tonsure ceremony when he was five-years old. The lama was Sakya Dakchen Jamyang Tutop Wangchuk (*sa skya bdag chen 'jam dbyang mthu stobs dbang phyug;* 1588-1637), who traveled from Sakya to Kham in 1620.[68] His first destination was Degé, where he was a guest of the princely lama Kunga Gyatso, the older brother of the eventual founder of Degé Jampa Puntsok. During his visit the Sakya Dakchen met the young Dündül Dorjé and performed the tonsure ceremony for him, ushering the boy into the religious life. After his stay in Derge the Sakya Dakchen went to Trehor (*tre hor* in Kardzé, *dkar mdzes*) and the two never met him again.[69]

(me yos; 1627). There is a consensus among the texts, though, about how old he was when he died and the year he died, e.g., age 58 in the water rat year (chu byi; 1672). This affords us with a basis from which to select between the two different dates offered for his birth. The date of wood rabbit year (1615), found in the former two sources, is clearly the most reasonable option.

[67] Takrepa Künzang Pema Loden, Biography and History of Treasure Discoveries, 11.6, highlight's his birthplace's proximity to Katok: shar phyogs mdo khams dpal kaH thog gi sa'i cha/ 'bri chu dal 'bab kyi g.yon/ sde dge pho brang gi mnga' ris/ zul chu'i rgyud 'bri gnyan 'dong rdo rje blo gros kyi gnas dang nye ba/ rlung mda'i pho brang gi phu rdo thang zhes bya ba.

[68] Kunga Lodrö (kun dga' blo gros; 1729-1783), *Addendum to the Sakya Genealogy Marvelous Storehouse* (sa skya'i gdung rabs ngo mtshar bang mdzod kyi kha skong), 238-239.

[69] Ibid., 239.

A few years later Kunga Gyatso gave Dündül Dorjé ordination as a novice monk and bestowed on him the name Kunga Sönam Chöpak (*kun dga' bsod nams chos 'phags*).[70] While still a youth and studying in his homeland Dündül apprenticed under two more teachers: Shenyen Chökyong Trashi (*bshes gnyen chos skyong bkra shis*)[71] and Ardo Könchog Sengé (*a rdo dkon mchog seng ge*).[72] Dündül greatly admired Ardo and later left Lhundrupténg to follow him to the vibrant Muksang (*rmug sangs*) religious center nearby for training.[73] Muksang is located in Jomda (*jo mda'*), which later became part of the Degé kingdom.

In his early twenties Dündül Dorjé traveled to Ü and Tsang (*dbus gtsang*), taking the southerly route through Kongpo (*kong po*). In Kongpo he studied Dzokchen with the *siddha* and treasure revealer Trashi Tseten (*grub thob gter ston bkra shis tshe brtan*) of Chakdé (*lcags sde*).[74] This lama founded the "close lineage of the one-to-one transmission of the esoteric path focusing on the common upper door

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[70] Takrepa, *Biography and History of Treasure Discoveries*, 12.5-13.1: Kunga Gyatso was an ecumenical lama and studied under several eminent Sakya and Nyingma masters; For a list of his teachers see Kolmaš, *A Genealogy of the Kings of Dege,* 90-91.

[71] He appears not to have been an important lama in the lineage and little is written about him in the histories.

[72] Jamyang Gyeltsen, *Brief History of Katok*, 83.

[73] Muksang (variously labeled a *dgon pa*, *ri khrod,* and *sgrub gnas*) is located near Pelyül Monastery, though on the opposite side of the Dri River. Muksang was a hub of Nyingma and Kagyü visionary movements in the seventeenth centuries. The most renowned lamas associated with the center during this time were Karma Chakmé (*kar+ma chags med;* 1613-1678), Namchö Mingyur Dorjé (*gnam chos mi 'gyur rdo rje;* 1645-1667), and Kunzang Sherap (*kun bzang shes rab;* 1636-1698). The latter went on to found Pelyül Monastery in 1665. For more on Muksang see the late Jampel Zangpo's (*'jam dpal bzang po*; b. 1900) "biography" of the place, called *phrin las grub pa'i dben gnas chen po rmugs sangs gnas kyi rtogs brjod tshangs sras bzhad pa'i sgra dbyangs.*

[74] Takrepa, *Biography and History of Treasure Discoveries*, 13.4. Jamyang Gyeltsen, *History of Katok,* 87, calls him Nyang po Bkra shis tshe brten.

and uncommon lower door teachings" (*nye brgyud gsang lam gcig brgyud kyi thun mong stod sgo thun min 'og sgo skor*).[75] Dündül Dorjé learned the subtle body yogas from this master and put them into practice by the side of the Drakkar Lhachu River (*brag dkar lha chu*). Dündül Dorjé became so proficient in the practices he was able to abandon solid food and subsist on consecrated herbal pills (*bcud len*). After an unstated amount of time, Dündül Dorjé continued his travels, going as far west as Sakya (*sa skya*) before turning back.[76] He returned to Kongpo, and at age twenty-five met Jatsön Nyingpo (*'ja' tshon snying po*; 1585-1656), a master who would change his life.[77] Jatsön Nyingpo was one of the most consequential treasure revealers of the first half of the seventeenth century. His treasure cycle the *Gathering of All Precious Jewels* (Könchok Chidü; *dkon mchog spyi 'dus*) cycle is easily one of the most widespread treasure traditions in Tibet. Jatson Nyingpo gave Dündül many teachings and initiations. He then ordered Dündül to go to Powo – long a stronghold of treasure activity – to practice assiduously while waiting for a prophecy regarding his destined Treasure revelations.[78] He did so, expending much effort on the practice of Ratna

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[75] http://tbrc.org/link?RID=P6992. This record on the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center's online database cites as its source for this information *tshe dbang nor bu'i rnam thar gyi cha shas brjod pa ngo mtshar dad pa'i rol mtsho* (f. 47v).

[76] Takrepa, Biography and History of Treasure Discoveries, 13.6-14.1

[77] A hagiographical sketch of Jatsön Nyingpo is found in *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* by Dudjom Rinpoche, 809-812. Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History,* 518, notes that Trashi Tseten and Jatson Nyingpo were treasure masters (*chos bdag*) of each other's Treasures. Jatson Nyingpo was also a teacher of Dundul's first teacher Kunga Gyasto.

[78] Takrepa, Biography and History of Treasure Discoveries, 14; khyod rang spu bor song la rtse gcig tu bsgrub pa la 'bungs shig dang de'i dus su khyod la lung bstan 'ong zhing skal pa zhig yod do. The age of 25 is not mentioned in either of the two biographical sources yet it is given in the "secret autobiography:" dag snang yid bzhin nor bu dbang gi rgyal po skyo bsangs ma (v. 10, pp. 55-128). This latter work is a detailed account of the mystical experiences surrounding his first treasure extraction.

Lingpa's *Utterly Secret and Unsurpassed Kīla* (*rat+na gling pa'i phur pa yang gsang bla med kyi sgrub pa*). Dündül Dorjé's treasure discovery career commenced a few years later when he was twenty-eight-years old, and continued until his death at age fifty-eight.

Dündül Dorjé's Textual Treasures

Dündül Dorjé's thirty -year career as a treasure revealer resulted in the "discovery" of textual treasures and a variety of material objects such as statues and pills.[79] He also consecrated many "hidden valleys" (*sbas yul*) and pilgrimage spots, whose locations he identified and described to other Tibetans. Within a century of his death Dündül's written treasures had been codified into a twelve-volume collection and the edition currently in circulation also has twelve volumes,[80] though its editorial history has yet to be studied in depth.[81] Treasures from two of these cycles (plus a

[79] The source for the next two paragraphs is Takrepa, *Biography and History of Treasure Discoveries*, esp. the chapter on Dundul's revelation of treasures (21.6-47.4).

[80] The xylographic edition currently in wide circulation was carved and printed in the early twentieth century by Pema Thukje Wangchuk (*pad+ma thugs rje dbang phyug*), the son of Tertön Drimé (*gter ston dri med*). This family of lamas was based at Sengri (*seng ri*) Monastery – nearby to Katok Monastery – in present-day Pelyül County, Sichuan. This twelve-volume edition of his treasures contains over eight named treasure cycles. Bairo Tulku published the entire set (apparently complete), together with its companion collection of the *Collected Treasures of Longsel Nyingpo*, in Darjeeling in 1997.

[81] The best single source for this history is the work in Longsel Nyingpo's Collected Treasures called Account of the Publication of Longsel Nyingpo's Treasures (klong gsal snying po'i zab chos skor rnams seng ri'i chos sgar du spar du bskrun pa'i gtam bstan pa mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan), which explains the publication of both collections.

pilgrimage guide; *gnas yig*) have been included in the famous Rinchen Terdzö (*rin chen gter mdzod*) compilation of treasure texts.[82]

While meditating at Yutso Rinchendrak (*g.yu mtsho rin chen brag*) in Powo at age twenty-eight (approx. 1642), Dündül Dorjé obtained the registry (*kha byang*) for his first treasure cycle, the *Collection of the Intention of the Holy Dharma* (*Damchö Gongpa Yongdü; Dam chos dgongs pa yongs 'dus*). Dündül Dorjé's first consort Lhachik Pemakyi (*lha gcig pad+ma skyid*) assisted his excavation of this treasure cycle. Dündül and Lhachik Pemakyi had a son named Gyelsé Norbu Yongdrak (*rgyal sras nor bu yongs grags*) who later became an important member of his father's community.

Soon after, Dündül revealed his second Treasure cycle in three volumes, the *True Doctrine, the Innermost Spirituality of the Body of Emanations* (*Damchö Trülku Nyingtik; dam chos sprul sku snying thig*). It was also highly regarded in some later Nyingma circles and several titles from it were included in the Rinchen Terndzö. This cycle also proved to be very controversial later in his life because of its confrontational prophesies.[83]

The third of Dündül Dorjé's four major cycles of textual Treasures is the Profoundly Significant, Secret Innermost Spirituality (Zabdön Sangwa Nyingthik; zab don gsang ba snying thig). He discovered it in Puri Dakdzong Puk (spu ri dwags

[82] Treasures from the True Doctrine, Innermost Spirituality of the Body of Emanation (sprul sku snying thig) and Trio of Amitayus, Yangdak, and Kīla, and a pilgrimage guide (gnas yig) of the Machen Pomra (rma chen spom ra) are collected in the Great Storehouse of Precious Treasures.

[83] Cf. Ronis, "Bdud 'dul rdo rje (1615-1672) and Rnying ma Adaptations to the Era of the Fifth Dalai Lama."

rdzong phug), which would appear to be somewhat to the west of Powo. The fourth and final major cycle of Treasures that Dündül Dorjé discovered during his very productive thirties was excavated in Puri Shelgyi Yangdrom (spu ri shel gyi yang sgrom). It is called the Trio of Amitāyus, Yangdak Heruka, and Vajrakīla (Tseyangphur Sum; tshe yang phur gsum).

Dündül Dorjé Returns to Degé

By the time of Dündül's fourth series of Treasures, when he was in his later thirties, his fame had spread to his home region of Degé. Dündül's old teacher, Kunga Gyatso and the first king of Degé Jampa Püntsok invited him to return to Degé.[84] There is a short text in Dündül's *Collected Treasures* that claims to be a song written to register his feelings about the invitation and prospects of going to Degé to be a court lama of a polity much larger than the local scale in which he had been operating in Powo. The work is called *Mad Song Expressing Discouragement by Madman Dündül Dorjé* (*mi smyon bdud 'dul rdo rje'i glu smyon yid skyo ma*). In the "mad song" Dündül feigns embarrassment (*khrel*) about the invitation. The song begins,[85] "Guru pema siddhi hung. Once while in retreat on Déchen Plain – in front of Dak Mountain's secret spirit, a meditation site of the Guru – the dharmarāja of

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[84] Takrepa, Biography and History of Treasure Discoveries, 15.6-16.2.

[85] Dündül Dorjé, Mad Song Expressing Discouragement by Madman Dündül Dorjé, 170.1: gu ru pad+ma sid+d+hi hUM hrI: kho bo bdud 'dul rdo rje bdag: gu ru'i bsgrub gnas dwags ri gsang ba gnyan gyi mdun: bde chen thang du mtshams skabs zhig tu: dpal mi'i dbang po shar mdo khams chos rgyal sa skyong bstan pa'i bdag po snyan pas sa phyogs kun la khyab pa: sde dge nas spyan 'dren pa nan du 'ong ba la brten nas: nga sdod dang nga chis kyi rnam rtog lu gu rgyud de shor bas: rang gis rang yid khrel zhing 'di skad ces smras so.

Kham, king (*sa skyong*), and master of the teachings, whose fame pervades all places, fervently invited me, Dündül Dorjé to Dege. As a result I got lost in an interlocking chain of thoughts of 'I will stay' and 'I will go' such that I embarrassed myself and uttered the following (mad song)." Dündül's main concern in the body of the text is that going to Degé somehow may lead to his meeting with Yamarāja, Lord of Death. In this song Dündül sings,[86] "I have no idea when the Lord of Death, fatal conditions, will befall (me). Like a duck waiting for fish; like a seizer -planet eclipsing the sun and moon; and a hawk with a baby bird in its talons, when will Yama the Lord of Death strike me, a beggar monk, with the same fate?"

In the song Dündül applies cont emplative teachings to his concerns about dying during his trip to, or stay in, Degé. In the later verses he defiantly states that he "has no fear" (*mi 'jigs*). A few representative lines are,[87] "If the great enemy called Yama, Lord of Death is going to strike, then tell him to hurry and come now! I am a descendant of the deathless Padmasambhava, and the sky-like clear light of intrinsic awareness is indestructible. I am not afraid of the superficial (deeds of) Yama, Lord of Death." In this song Dündül Dorjé does not anticipate any of the other troubles that he may encounter while a court lama of a young and expanding kingdom with an established state temple belonging to a sect other than his own.

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[86] Ibid., 171.1: 'chi bdag gshin rje zer ba'i dgra bo che: 'on kyang 'ong na da lta myur du shog: 'chi med pad+ma 'byung gnas bu rgyud dang: rang rig 'od gsal nam mkha' 'jig med la: glo bur 'chi bdag gshin rjer nga mi 'jigs.

[87] Takrepa, Biography and History of Treasure Discoveries, 15.6.

In 1656, at the age of forty-two, Dündül Dorjé made a triumphant return to Kham as an established religious master and discover of revealed treasures. The *Biography* – a biased source, no doubt – says that he was given a grand reception at the palace that was attended by all of the lamas in the region.[88] In terms of Dündül's participation in the broader pan -Tibetan religious world, the move to Degé was certainly his greatest professional advancement to date. The court interpreted Dündül's presence in Degé as the fulfillment of a prophecy to benefit the religious and sec ular spheres of the kingdom.[89] The government even sponsored the construction of a temple bearing his name – the Demon Taming Temple (Dündül Lhakhang; *bdud 'dul lha khang*) – in which rituals were to be performed by Dündül for the benefit and protection of the state.[90] The recent *Brief History of Katok* says that the liturgies recited at the temple were protector rites from Dündül's own treasures.[91] Dündül also traveled widely in Degé, perhaps in his capacity as a royally sponsored lama. He spent the majority of his time in the southern parts of the kingdom, including Dzin (*'dzin/ 'dzing*), Barom (*'ba' rom*), and Katok. Dündül Dorjé's *Biography* does not make special mention of his activities while at Katok, and neither does *Guru Trashi's History* or the *Brief History of Katok*.

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[88] Ibid.,

[89] Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History,* 567.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Jamyang Gyeltsen, 87: bdud 'dul lha khang zhes grags pa de bzhengs nas rang lugs kyi bstan srung rnams rgyun du mchod pa'i mgon khang bzhag.

Despite having been invited by the king of Dege, Dündül Dorjé and the court had a major falling out. The best account of the difficult situation is found in *Guru Trashi's History*, which is frequently candid about such controversies and scandals.[92] This Nyingma-biased work describes the event as follows,[93]

> The dharmarāja of Degé respectfully worshipped (Dündül) and built the Demon Taming Temple and others at Lhundrüpténg in the Ngül Valley. (Together they) accomplished many activities that fulfilled the prophecies about (Dündül) benefitting the Teachings and government. Nevertheless owing to several demonic ministers the auspicious connections of the arrangements were nearly disrupted (*log min du gyur pa)*. (Dündül) became discouraged and as he expressed in the 'Mad Song of Sudden Sadness' (*smyon glu thol ma*), the treasure revealer and his disciples fled to Lingtsang."

In a later chapter of *Guru Trashi's History* there is another, more specific account of the incident: "Because of the deliberate misconstructions (*log sgrub*) and

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[92] The *Biography and History of Treasure Discoveries* does not recall that Dündul had problems. Furthermore, Jamgön Kongtrül biographical compendia the *Hundreds of Treasure Revealers* (*gter ston brgya rtsa)* and Dudjom Rinpoche's *History of the Nyingma School* are also silent on the incident.

[93] Ngawang Lodrö, Guru Trashi's History, 567: sde dge chos kyi rgyal pos bsnyen bkur gyis mchod nas dngul mda' lhun grub steng du bdud 'dul lha khang sogs bzhengs nas bstan srid la phan pa'i lung don sgrub pa sogs mdzad kyang/ bdud rigs kyi blon po 'ga' zhig gis mtshams sbyor gyi rten 'brel log min du gyur pas thugs skyo nas smyon glu thol ma gsung mgur du gnang ba bzhin gter ston dpon slob rnams gling tshang phyogs su bros stabs su phebs. The full name of this song is the mA ra bi na ya badz+ra gyi smyo glu thol byung ma, and it is found in Dundul Dorjé's Collected Treasures, v. 10, pp. 173-190. The mad song referred to in the excerpt is the companion to the previously cited song. This one is a long diatribe that uses a stream of animal analogies and rhetorical questions to express Dündül's fury at the various forces that thwarted his work in Degé. Unraveling its many allusions and meanings is beyond the scope of the present study.

slander made by many clever and impudent ones such as lama Sangyé Pelzang (*sangs rgyas dpal bzang*) the auspicious connections between the great king of Degé and Rindzin Dündül Dorjé were derailed."[94]

After the falling-out,[95] Dündül Dorjé and his entourage fled to Lingtsang. This kingdom was to the north of Degé and at this time was in a greatly reduced state due to the rise of Degé. Dündül Dorjé also traveled to Barkham (*bar khams*), Gatö (*sga stod*), Denyul (*ldan yul;* same as *ldan/ 'dan ma*), and Karma Lhaténg (*kar+ma lha steng*) after leaving Dege. The *Guru Trashi's History* concludes its account of Dündül's jinxed time in northern Kham with a mention of the date of his return to Powo: 1661. Thus his entire sojourn to his radically transformed homeland and neighboring areas took over seven years. Back in Dechentang, Powo, Dündül was once again in friendly territory. There he attracted many young lamas who would go on to become major figures in Degé religion.

Dündül was also an active teacher and mentor, in addition to being a prolific treasure revealer. His list of dharma heirs reads like a who's who of great lamas

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[94] Ngawang Lodrö, Guru Trashi's History, 752: de yang sde dge sa dbang chen po/ rig 'dzin bdud 'dul rdo rje gnyis/ bla ma sangs rgyas dpal bzang sogs mi bsrun pa'i blo can mang po zhig gis log sgrub dang snyan phra la brten rten 'brel gzhan dbang du gyur ba la…

[95] We will never know exactly what transpired during Dündul's short stay in Degé such that he had to flee to Lingtsang. It is reasonable, though, to assume that his problems in Degé are attributable to both 1) sectarian opposition to him from Sakya lamas and 2) his own naiveté. Despite whatever appreciation the king had for his revelations, the Degé family had long been patrons of the Sakya sect. While he was occupied with establishing a place for himself in the overall religious field of Degé, he also had to compete with the missionary efforts of the Sakya lamas who were also invited to the region. It is likely that important members of the court's inner circle were bigoted against non-Sakya lamas and institutions and did their best to thwart his attempts to establish himself as a long-term presence. Yet part of the blame must also be laid at Dündul's feet. Clearly his diplomatic skills were not up to the task of dealing with the fraught situation in Degé. His dealings with the fifth Dalai Lama show Dündul to be rash and opportunistic. Perhaps these personality traits also contributed to his unceremonious departure from Degé. Cf. Ronis, "Bdud 'dul rdo rje (1615-1672) and Rnying ma Adaptations to the Era of the Fifth Dalai Lama."

active in Kham in the latter half of the seventeenth century: founder of Dzokchen Monastery Pema Rindzin (*pad+ma rig 'dzin;* 1625-1697), treasure revealer Mingyur Dorjé (*mi 'gyur rdo rje*; 1645-1667), treasure revealer Nyima Drakpa (*nyi ma grags pa;* 1647-1710), treasure revealer Taksham Nüden Dorjé (*stag sham nus ldan rdo rje*; b. 1655), and others. Dündül's teaching career began before his trip to Degé and continued (seemingly) unabated after his exile from the kingdom. The sources give the impression that during the 1650s and 60s Dündül Dorjé was *the* Nyingma teacher to seek out for training and blessings, much as Jatsön Nyingpo was for him.[96]

Dündül's most devoted student, however, and the one most pertinent to the study of Katok monastery, is Longsel Nyingpo (*klong gsal snying po;* 1625-1692). He was another great treasure revealer and Degé court lama whose lineages persist to the present and work is canonized in the Rinchen Terndzö. This chapter now turns to his life story and his historic role in the development of Katok Monastery. To conclude, however, it should be reiterated that the preceding section has shown that on the eve of Longsel Nyingpo's arrival at Katok that two regional developments were significant for Katok. Firstly, the monastery now lay within the domain of a new and rising polity, Dege. Secondly the most famous Nyingma lamas in Kham at this time were primarily involved in treasure cults and not the Kama, scholasticism, or celibate monasticism.

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[96] For more on Dündül Dorjé's teaching career see Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History*; Karma Chakmé, *Outer Biography of Trülku Mingyur Dorjé*, ch.15; Dudjom Rinpoche, *Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, 813-817.

Longsel Nyingpo and the Revival of Katok

The preceding sections laid the groundwork for an examination of Longsel Nyingpo's impact on Katok Monastery in the late seventeenth century. Longsel Nyingpo set in motion several processes at Katok that rocked the cultural and administrative life of the monastery for many generations. In many respects the rest of the dissertation is an analysis of the fallout from Longsel Nyingpo's momentous tenure at Katok. This section will consider Longsel Nyingpo's activities and influence at Katok in terms of three rubrics: 1) Longsel's pre-Katok religious career as a treasure revealer based in southern Kham, his invitation from the royal court of Degé to visit the kingdom, and his move to Katok Monastery; 2) Longsel's revelation at Katok of a new cycle of treasures that was composed so as to be compatible earlier Katok traditions; and 3) Longsel's immediate successors at Katok and an assessment of their impact on the adminstration of the monastery.

Longsel Nyingpo's Early life and move to Degé

The primary source for Longsel Nyingpo's life is the profile of him found in *Guru Trashi's History*.[97] Unfortunately his *Collected Works* in twelve volumes does not contain any substantial biographical writings (unlike Dündül Dorjé's *Collected Works*). Longsel Nyingpo was born near the renowned sacred mountain Kampo Né (*kaM po gnas*) in southern Kham, where the highlands of Litang meet the forested valleys of Batang. He came from a farming family and their village was in an area

[97] Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History,* 571-574 and 752-754.

called Trapa (*dpra pa, dbra pa,* or *dbra bya*), located in present-day Litang County, Sichuan. Longsel was born in 1625, the female wood ox year of the tenth sexagenary cycle. During his early childhood Drupwang Tenpa Gyatso (*grub dbang bstan pa rgya mtsho*) initiated him into the mandala of the Fierce Guru (*gu ru drag po*) and gave him the name Wangdrak Gyatso (*dbang drag rgya mtsho*).

Longsel Nyingpo was very religious as a child but his parents refused to let him take ordination. At age twenty-two he ran away from home to study the Dharma (*chos bros*) and traveled to the Degé area during the first full decade of the kingdom's existence, the 1640s. For three years he studied at both Katok and Kham Ujang Monastery (*khams dbus byang dgon*). The latter monastery is in Garjé (*sga rje*), which is to the south of Katok and also in present-day Pelyül County.[98] There he studied with Garjé Chökyong Gyatso (*rga rje chos skyong rgya mtsho*).[99] At Katok Monastery he studied with one of Dündül Dorjé's teachers, Ardo Könchok Senggé (*a rdo dkon mchog seng ge*).[100] Longsel was very poor when he first arrived at Katok but nevertheless experienced visionary dreams and met a great lama. A colophon from one of Longsel's writings quotes a statement made by Longsel about his three-year stay at and around Katok during this period of training. This account begins,[101]

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[98] The History of the Monasteries in Kardzé Prefecture (*khams phyogs dkar mdzes khul gyi dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus gsal bar bshad pa*), vol. 2, 203-213, contains a detailed account of this monastery.

[99] Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History*, 765

[100] Both Ngawang Lodrö's *Guru Trashi's History* and Kenpo Jamyang's *A Brief History of Katok* say that Longsel studied with Ado Könchok Gyeltsan (*a rdo dkon mchog rgyal mtshan*), but this is impossible as he lived long before Longsel. Rather he studied with Ado Könchok Sengé, who was also Dündul's teacher.

[101] Longsel Nyingpo, Ocean of Offering Clouds Used During General Assemblies (spyi tshogs mchod sprin rgya mtsho), 658. The full colophon reads, ces pa yang kaH thog tu dang po slebs dus longs spyod bkren pa

When I first arrived at Katok my provisions were meager. In a dream somebody said, "This life-long retreatant trülku was initially a monk of the Kagyü order (*dkar lugs*), therefore when he performs the circle of feasts he remembers past lives and tells what happened (in the past)." The next day I dedicated (the merit) of one feast gathering. I offered feast offerings and scarves of five types of fabric to the old lama from Gönnyin, Kunzang Onpo (*kun bzang dbon po dgon nyin bla rgan*). I did that about two or three times and was also diligent at making pills used at feast gatherings (*tshogs ril*). [He then recounts a dream about the power of his pills] ...I practiced for three years.

Around age twenty-five Longsel left Degé and returned to his homeland. However he did not take up the householder's life and instead spent many years in retreat. During this time he meditated in huts and caves in Chölung Ritrö (*chos lung ri khrod*), Kholri (*khol ri*), Kamponé Cave (*kaM po gnas phug*), Tromgyi Dzongnak (*khrom gyi rdzong nag*). Finally at age twenty-eight, approximately 1652, Longsel returned home to his parents. While back home, Longsel was confronted by many

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tsam byung dus/ rmi lam zhig las/ mi zhig gis tshe mtshams sprul sku 'di/ dang po dkar lugs kyi ban+de zhig yin pas tshogs 'khor bskor bas skye ba dran pa dang 'di ltar byung ba yin zhes rmis pas/ phyir nyin tshogs gcig bsngos pas/ tshogs phud dang kha btags ras yug le tshan lnga tsam kun bzang dbon po dgon nyin bla rgan drung du phul btang / de 'dra ba lan gnyis gsum tsam 'bul slar bum sgrub sogs kyis dus tshogs ril la brtson pa'o/ de yang chu sprel bcu bzhi'i nub rmi lam zhig la/ tshogs sha chen po mi 'dug/ tshogs ril ni byin gyis brlabs te sangs rgyas kyi zhing khams mtha' yas pa'i drung du 'bul ba ni/ sngon rje lo ral pa gnam mtsho ngos su sku mtshams mdzad dus sgrub rgyag chad skabs nyung ngur bsags pa'ang za thon/ grwa pa yang 'chi la thugs skabs spro ba rdobs dang tshogs 'khor cig e snang gsungs/ tshogs mthe'u chung tshigs tsam ba'i dngos grub kyi mtsho rlabs kyi sha ba'i ro gcig 'bab 'phangs/ de lo gsum gyi sgrub rgyag byung gsung / zhes pa zhes pa 'di yang kaH thog rdo rje'i gdan gyi dben gnas su spar du bsgrub pa'o.

ḍākinīs in visionary encounters who made pronouncements about his destiny to reveal treasures. He initially paid them no mind but eventually heeded their call.

The ḍākinīs ordered Longsel to train under Dündül Dorjé and he complied by traveling to Powo to seek out this master. Dündül gave Longsel many initiations and instructions and provided further confirmation of his status as a treasure revealer. After a couple of years of tutelage under him,[102] Dündül ordered Longsel to return home to practice in a retreat called the Khalong Ritrö (*mkha' klong ri khrod*).

Longsel's treasure career began in the fire monkey year of 1656 when he was thirty-two years old. That year a dark red yogi draped in jewelry made of bones came in the flesh and handed him the registry (*kha byang*) for a cycle of treasures. This intense mystical event inspired him to believe firmly that he was an emanation of Guru Rinpoche and fated to reveal treasures. It was, of course, the monkey year, which is Guru Rinpoche's birth year. Longsel practiced the "treasure accomplishment" (*gter sgrub*) rites for the rest of that year and all of the next (monkey and bird years). The following year (1658, *sa khyi*) Longsel excavated his first treasures at Khé Mingyur Dorjédrak (*khe mi 'gyur rdo rje brag*). In all, Longsel drew treasures from sixteen "treasuries."[103] Most of his treasure sites were in the Litang and Batang areas.[104] Longsel married a woman from a village close to Pung

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[102] Kenpo Jamyang, *Brief History of Katok,* 88, states that Longsel stayed with Dündul for three years. The much earlier *Guru Trashi's History* clearly says that they Longsel left after a short period of time (*mi ring bar*).

[103] Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History*, 572: gter kha chen po bcu drug gter nas bzhes.

[104] Longsel Nyingpo's *Collected Treasures* is organized around eight major cycles (*skor tsho*) of treasures and miscellanea, and three regular cycles (*skor*) or treasures. The six major cycles of treasures were

Mountain of the East (*shar phyogs spung ri*) and they had one son and one daughter. The son was named Sönam Deutsen (*bsod nams lde'u btsan*; born in the early 1670s) and said to be the immediate rebirth of Dündül Dorjé (d. 1672). Longsel Nyingpo subsequently took another two women to be his consorts.

Longsel's home base during these years of intensive treasure revelation and dissemination was Khölri Sangngakling (*khol ri gsang* temple, in present-day Napo (*sna po*) Township, Litang County.[105] Longsel renovated the original temple built by Brutsa Gangpa Tsondru Zangpo ('*bru tsha sgangs pa brtson 'grus bzang po;* fl. 13-14th cent.*)*. The most notable new structure he built was the Rindzin Lhakhang (*rig 'dzin lha khang*), also known as Khandro Bumdzong (*mkha' 'gro 'bum rdzong*). The murals in the main chapel and top story (*dbu thog*) were based on visions Longsel experienced and later described in the *Jewel Rosary of Pure Visions* (*dag snang nor*

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excavated in, respectively: *khe mi 'gyur rdo rje'i phug, khe nang 'od gsal 'ja' lus phug, bde chen pad+ma brag dkar, gnam chen brag dkar zla gam dbang gi dkyil 'khor, khe nang 'od gsal 'ja' lus phug, and sna brag dkar khams kyi seng+ge gnam rdzong*. All of these are in Litang and Batang.

[105] See Jamyang Lodrö Gyatso ('jam dbyangs blo gros rgya mtsho; d.u.), *Pilgrimage Guide to Khölri Sangngakling* (*khol ri gsang sngags chos gling gi gnas yig*), 350 – a detailed pilgrimage guide and history of Kholri – in Karma Gyeltsen, *Compilation of Pilgrimage Guides to Kham*.

The 13-14th century Katok abbot Brutsa Gangpa Tsondru Zangpo ('*bru tsha sgangs pa brtson 'grus bzang po)* is credited with opening up the "hidden valley" of Kolri and establishing a small temple there. Later a lama named Janchub Gyaltsen developed the site further. He was born in Longsel's same region of Trapa. The similarities shared by their life stories continues. Jangchub Gyaltsen also stayed at Kalong Dechen Retreat, where he met real ḍākinīs and discovered treasures. The history does not record to what extent Janchub Gyaltsen built up Kolri. One or two liturgies he wrote for use at the temple are still extant, though. Longsel reworked one of them and it is included in his *Collected Treasures (gsung thor bu las lha mo'i gsol mchod nyung ngur bsdus pa*, vol. 5, pp. 537-540). A few generations later (Jangchub Gyaltsen's exact dates are unknown) Longsel Nyingpo was given the temple and renovated it.

bu'i phreng ba). After Longsel's departure to Katok, the descendants of Dündül Dorjé's son Norbu Yongdrak administered Kolri Retreat.[106]

Longsel's homeland Litang had long known Mongolian civil and military officials, traders, and chieftains. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, during the Yuan dynasty Mongolians overran Litang with trading stations and garrisons. During the middle of the seventeenth century it appears that Oirat Mongols had a presence in Litang, and Kham more generally. The Oirats were descendants of men who "held senior office in the Mongol empire but were not themselves recognized descendants of Chinggis Khan," and emerged as a major power in the fifteenth century.[107] Longsel attracted the patronage of leading Oirat chiefs of the Right Banner or Barungar.[108] The first of Longsel's Mongol patrons was Kokonor chief Chönyid Rangdrol (*mtsho kha dpon chos nyid rang grol*). He was apparently a ranking leader of an Oirat tribe in the vicinity of Lake Kokonor, which was home to both Tibetans and Mongolians. Chönyid Rangdröl was an enthusiastic student of Longsel and is listed as the requestor of a treasure in Longsel's Fierce Guru cycle.[109] The treasures were

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[106] Jamyang Lodrö Gyatso, Pilgrimage Guide to Khölri Sangngakling, 350.

[107] Sneath, *The Headless State*, 33. I thank Gray Tuttle and Nicolas Sihlé who, independently of one another, referred me to this book.

[108] Ricard, *The Life of Shabkar,* 565; "The Mongolian nation was divided into a series of principalities or "banners" (Tib. *dpon khag*, Mong. *khoshun*). Each was ruled by a Jasag (*ja sag*, pronounced *dzasa* by Tibetans), who could belong to any of the various ranks of the Mongolian nobility, from that of Chingwang, king or prince of the first order, to that of *Gung* or duke."

[109] The name of the text is *sbas don mngon rtogs yid bzhin snying po* and it is found in vol. 6, pp. 605-624 of the *Collected Treasures.*

discovered in Litang, though, so it is unclear whether they met in Kham or the Kokonor region.

Longsel's most important Mongol student and patron was a the reigning head of the Right Banner, named Khandro Lozang Tenkyong (*mkha 'gro blo bzang bstan skyong*). Drawing on the *History of Amdo* (*mdo smad chos 'byung*) and the late twentieth century Amdo scholar Mugé Samten (*dmu dge bsam gtan*, 1914 -1993), Ricard gives the following profile of Khandro,[110]

> Gushri Khan's fifth son, Tsering Elduchi (*tse ring el du chi*), ruled over a vast territory: the whole of Choneh (*co ne*), Upper and Lower Rekong (*reb kong stod smad*), Ngawa (*rnga ba*), and Rado (*rwa mdo*). Tsering Elduchi's eldest son, Khandro Lobzang Tenkyong, conquered the entire Six Ranges of Kham (*mdo khams sgang drug*) and adjacent regions up to Dartsedo (*dar rtse mdo,* Tachienlu or Kangding) in the east. He eventually settled in the Dzachuka area (*rdza chu kha*) and adopted the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Other chieftains were displeased by this and had him assassinated.

At some point Khandro invited Longsel to "Mongolian lands" (*sog yul*) and he went. Considering Ricard's account perhaps the Mongolian area visited by Longsel was actually the Oirat base in Dzachukha, Kham, and not Mongolia as commonly understood. Guru Trashi says Kandro tested the level of Longsel's spiritual

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[110] Ricard, *The Life of Shabkar*, p. 565.

cultivation (*nyams tshad*) and was very impressed with his abilities.[111] Longsel deployed his magic for the benefit of Kandro's governance and in return the king then invested Longsel with the title of *dishi* (Tib. *ti shri*), a Yuan-era title that means preceptor of the imperial family.

Khandro appears several times in Longsel's *Collected Treasures*. Many of the mentions appear in colophons in his *Miscellaneous Writings* (*gsung thor bu*), collected into a four -hundred-and-sixty-folia side title in volume eleven. For instance, there is a short invocation to protectors (*'phrin bcol*) whose colophon states, "This composition was written on a ceremonial scarf (*mjal dar*) by Vid yādhara Longsel Nyingpo when he was departing for Mongolia and later copied off the side of the scarf."[112] Another text was written in Mongolia. The colophon reads, "When king Khandro was honoring (Longsel Nyingpo) during (the latter's) stay in Mongolia (*sog po'i nang du*) and his defilements became inflamed, Longsel Nyingpo composed this supplication to the lama, who is the supreme of all vanquishers of interferences."[113]

Late in life Longsel was invited to Degé and then given control of Katok by Dege's king. Guru Trashi, who has a Nyingma bias, says that the new king of Degé Sangye Tenpa was very regretful of his uncle's mistreatment of Dündül and wanted

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[111] Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History,* 573.

[112] Longsel Nyingpo, Miscellaneous Writings, 77: rig 'dzin klong gsal snying po sog yul du byon khar phyar dar la phyag bris mdzad pa de phyis phyar dar logs las shal bshus pa'o.

[113] Ibid. The prayer itself is just one stanza in length and names Dündul Dorje as the lama to whom the supplication is directed.

to atone for this by forming a good relationship with his student Longsel Nyingpo. Guru Trashi reports that initially Longsel would not go to see the king of Degé in person, sending a representative instead.[114] The king of Degé – and by necessity the court and local Sakya lamas – were very respectful and this convinced Longsel's emissary that Degé genuinely wanted to support Longsel. Longsel then quickly traveled to Degé and served the king and court as a chaplain. Guru Trashi even says that he was made a *dishi*, the same title bestowed on him by Khandro.[115]

The historical record of Longsel's relations with the Degé c ourt is fragmentary and lacks many examples of Longsel bolstering the statecraft of the burgeoning kingdom. One of the few historical datum that attest to this is found in the *Royal Genealogies of Degé* in a passage that recounts many of the important blessings bestowed by past lamas upon the land and royal family. Longsel figures prominently in the passage. The text says that he is responsible for the royal seal of Degé, which he discovered as a treasure. The passage reads,[116]

> Once when Jatsön Nyingpo [Dündü1 Dorjé's lama] was conducting a communal feast for lama and disciples he (fashioned) out of dough the

[114] Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History,* 752. Longsel sent Trapa Tertön Jangchup Gyeltsen (*dpra pa gter ston byang chub rgyal mtshan*), who because of his name appears to be from the same homeland as Longsel.

[115] In all my readings of literature about Degé I don't recall ever seeing another instance of the royal court giving another lama this title. Thus I suspect that Guru Trashi is exaggerating this. In the eighteenth century Degé began using the title "chief lama" (*dbu bla*) for its highest-ranking chaplains.

[116] Kolmaš, A Genealogy of the Kings of Derge, 91; 'ja tshon snying pos bla slob tshogs 'kkhor skabs/ zan las che mchog pad+ma thod phreng gi/ phyag rtags sdigs gzugs bcos nas khyed rang gi/ brgyud pas 'di 'dra'i phyag rtags 'chang na dge/ gsungs bzhin phyis si pad+ma'i lung 'dzin pa/ 'khrul med gter chen klong gsal snying po yis/ sdig tham gter blangs sde dger phul mdzad pas/ srid dang chos kyi dge legs 'phel brtan du/ gyur nas da lta'ang de rgyun gnas 'di'o. Cf. Kalden Tsering, History of the Gönchen Monastery of Degé, 23.

> scorpion insignia [117] of Chemchok Padma Thötréng and said, 'I suggest that your family line carry an insignia like this.' Following that the inerrant great treasure revealer who was prophesied by Padma(sambhava), Longsel Nyingpo, extracted as treasure a scorpion seal and presented it to the Degé royal family. Owing to this the auspiciousness of (the kingdom's) politics and religion flourished and were constant. To this day (1828) the family line abides.

This passage suggests Longsel impressed the royal family with his contributions to the political culture of their royal court and that subsequent generations of Degé historians continued to see him as a notable figure in the early formation of the kingdom.

The exact year of Longsel Nyingpo's invitation to Degé are not recorded but the reign of his host, king Sangyé Tenpa (*sangs rgyas bstan pa*), spanned the 1660s, 70s, and 80s. His reign was characterized by manifest ecumenicalism and the growth of new monasteries. Nevertheless this period also knew much strife, especially in the south, where Katok is located. Sangye Tenpa's involvement with Longsel must be seen in this context. In order to set the stage for an investigation of the king's working relationship with Longsel, I will explain the circumstances of the founding of another Nyingma monastery along the southern frontier of the ever-expanding

[117] Cf, Heller, "Notes On The Symbol Of The Scorpion In Tibet."

kingdom and which Sangyé Tenpa had a decisive role in founding; namely, Pelyül Monastery (*dpal yul dgon*).

Pelyül Monastery is south of Katok and lies along the Ngul River (*dngul chu*), very close to its outlet into the Dri River (*'bri chu*). A late twentieth-century history of Pelyül Monastery gives an account of the how the region of Pelyül was incorporated into the Degé kingdom and how many monasteries in the area were impacted during the transition to Degé rule. The published English translation of this work reads,[118]

> …Lhachen [sic] Jampa Phuntsog, through the strength of his karma, merit, and power, became the first dharma king of Dege. Prior to his enthronement, the territory of Palyul was ruled by the Lithang Tongra Depa, Tsamdo was ruled by Goshi Ponchung and Barong was was ruled by Bagthur Khapa.[119] These three rulers surrendered to the new king of Dege and their territories came under King Lhachen Jampa Phuntsog's rule. A few additional territories were overcome forcefully, during which time many monasteries in the lower region of Kham were disrupted and completely destroyed... In accordance with the

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[118] Jampel Zangpo, The Astonishing Succession of Throne Holders of The Victorious and Powerful Palyul Tradition (rgyal dbang dpal yul ba'i gdan rabs ngo mshar 'chi med yongs 'du'i ljon pa'i phreng ba), 59.

[119] Pelyül, Tsamdo, and Barong are all very close together and fall within the boundaries of present-day Pelyul County.

> predictions of many holy lamas, King Lhachen Jampa Phuntsog[120] and Trichen Sangye Tanpa together built a new monastery and named it Palyul Namgyal Changchub Choling [*dpal yul rnam rgyal byang chub chos gling*]"

The violence and destruction touched upon in the above excerpt likely refers to a major insurrection that occurred between the surrender of Pelyül and her neighbors to king Jampa Phuntsok and Sangye Tenpa's founding of Katok. About the insurrection the *Royal Genealogy of Degé* says, "The golden wheel of forceful action utterly abolished the cruel behavior of the barbaric people of the lower territories such as Garjé (a baleful community) and Pelyül, and once again intern them within the vajra -enclosure of the law." [121] Pelyül Monastery was founded after this crackdown and eventually became one of the chief monasteries of Degé and to this day is a major center of Nyingma activity.[122] Kunzang Sherab (*kun bzang shes rab*), a student of Mingyur Dorjé and Karma Chakmé, was the first he ad lama of the

[120] I believe that this excerpt is incorrect about Jampa Püntsok being one of the founders of Pelyul. Much older sources such as Guru Trashi's History do not say that Jampa Püntsok was involved in the founding of the monastery. Jampa Püntsok had probably already died by this time.

[121] Kolmaš, A Royal Genealogy of the Kings of Derge, 101: las shugs gser gyi 'khor los sa smad kyi/ sga (mi bsrun pa'i sde) dpal la sogs dmu rgod 'gro ba rnams/ brlang spyod rmeg med bcil nas slar yang ni/ bka' khrims rdo rje'i ra bar 'da' med bcug.

[122] Pelyul Monastery is one of the five monasteries in Degé that was assigned to provide court chaplains (*dbu bla*) to the kingdom and is counted as one of the six mother monasteries (*ma dgon drug*) of the Nyingma sect. Currently the monastery has several effective lamas who are excellent teachers and fundraisers. They have built many new temples and monastic academies at Pelyul and its branch monasteries.

Pelyül.[123] As a monastery founded by the royal court in a restive region, it is reasonable to assume that the royal court relied upon the monastery to use its moral suasion to accept Degé's rule.

Katok also falls within this territory of southern Degé and is part of present-day Pelyül county. Knowing that in the latter half of the seventeenth century several communities in the Pelyül area were rebellious and that the kingdom was sometimes directly involved in religious affairs, one may ask if the royal court inserted itself into the economics and administration of Katok monastery at this time? The answer is a resounding yes. Just as the king of Degé chose the leader of Pelyül Monastery, he also appointed a new leader for Katok: treasure revealer Longsel Nyingpo.

The *Collected Letters* (*chab shog khag*) of Katok Rindzin Tsewang Norbu (*kaH thog rig 'dzin tshe dbang nor bu*; 1698-1755) provide a suggestive glimpse into the economic context of Longsel's move to Katok. In a letter addressed to the Seventh Dalai Lama Kelsang Gyatso (*skal bzang rgya mtsho*; 1708-1757) and dated 1752, Tsewang Norbu gives the Tibetan leader a short history lesson on Katok monastery.[124] Tsewang Norbu says the Drungpa lamas let Katok's cultural integrity (*lar rgya*) decline and had also amassed much land for themselves.[125] This attracted

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[123] See Zangpo, *A Garland of Immortal Wish-Fulfilling Trees,* ch.5, for a traditional account of his life in English.

[124] Tsewang Norbu is the primary subject of Chapter Two. His life and times are explored in detail therein.

[125] Tsewang Norbu, *Collected Letters*, 762. In the fifteenth century a new line of leaders gained control over the administration of the monastery. They were called the Drung line (*drung rabs*), with "drung" being an honorific title of authority. A student of the famed Ratna Lingpa (1403-1479) returned to Katok to set up a hereditary line of uncle and nephews who became the celibate heads of the monastery, with succession running through the progeny of the leader's brother(s). This line ran through thirteen generations, which were called the "thirteen generations of the Drung line" (drung rabs bcu gsum).

the attention of Degé, who took possession or control of (*bdag gir byas*) the monastery.[126] The letter states that after the expropriation "Degé (king) Sangyé Tenpa gave the entire monastery to treasure revealer Longsel Nyingpo and the Drungpa's estate was divided in two. Half was given to Longsel Nyingpo and half was applied towards Degé's gathering of the annual taxes."[127] According to the sequence of events in this letter, first Degé seized Katok and the Drungpa estate, and then appointed Longsel as the new leader of the monastery and shared the estate with him. Here we see Degé exercising dominance over the monastery's administration and finances, which bears comparisons with its founding of Pelyül Monastery. From this point on in Katok's history Degé remained influential at the monastery; sometimes lavishing donations on the monastery and sometimes even calling up militias of monks from Katok to fight in military campaigns against neighboring communities![128]

Katok monastery was in disrepair when Longsel Nyingpo first arrived. Guru Trashi says that when Longsel arrived at Katok it had no head resident lama and had fallen into "a little" disrepair.[129] The statement about Katok not having a head lama at the time is likely a nod to the fact that the Degé court had disempowered the Drung lamas by confiscating their estate. The recent official history of the monastery

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., gter ston klong gsal snying po la sde dge sangs rgyas bstan pas dgon pa tshang 'gril phul zhing drung pa'i chos gzhis gnyis su bsgom te phyed gter ston la phul/ phyed sde dge'i lo skor 'du ba'i thes su sbyar.

[128] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Autobiography*, 314.4.

[129] Ngawang Lodrö, Guru Trashi's History, 753: 'di skabs kaH thog tu gdan sa ba bla ma gzhan med pa dang cung zad nyams dma' ba'i skabs su 'chis kyang.

composed by the late abbot Jamyang Gyeltsen says, "He repaired the degradations of the important sites and the ruination of the temple, the building together with its icons. With limitless compassion he [Longsel] tamed all the pernicious behavior [of local agents such as] the degredation of the fertility of the land when it was seized by the evil demons."[130] Longsel repaired the exterior and interior of the assembly hall and constructed new statues.

After settling at Katok Longsel Nyingpo formed good relations with other lamas patronized by Dege. For instance Longsel became very close with Pema Rindzin, the founder of Dzokchen monastery. When Pema Rindzin was making the rounds on his state -sponsored tour of monasteries in Degé, he went to Katok. Longsel welcomed him and they became very close. Pema Rindzin stayed at Katok for a month and during this time the two lamas exchanged many teachings with each other.[131] In Longsel's last will and testament he orders his son Sönam Deutsen to go to Dzokchen to complete his training at the feet of Pema Rindzin.[132]

Longsel Nyingpo's Kama-Inspired Cycle of Treasures

In one respect Longsel Nyingpo's position at Katok was secure because the king of Degé had placed him at the helm of the monastery. Yet perhaps more was required for Longsel's successful integration at the monastery than merely being

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[130] Jamyang Gyeltsen, Brief History of Katok, 89: sa gnad nyams pa dang gtsug lag khang rten dang brten par bcas zhig ral song ba rnams nyams gso dang/ 'dre ngan gyis yul bzung nas bcud nyams pa ma rungs pa'i bya spyod mtha' dag tshad med pa'i thugs rjes 'dul bar dzad.

[131] Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History,* 754.

[132] Ibid.

given a mandate from Degé. Although Degé had dismantled the Drungpa administration of the monastery by confiscating their lands and replacing the Drungpa lamas with Longsel, when Longsel arrived at Katok it was not a clean slate. As seen in the accounts of Dündül Dorjé and Longsel's training under Katok lamas, Katok still had a relatively active training program. This raises the question, Did Longsel try to harmonize his treasures with the historical Katok heritage in any discernible way? The answer is yes. The claim of this section is that Longsel employed a twofold strategy to better integrate himself into the Katok institution and tradition, which involved 1) repackaging himself as an inheritor of the Kama teachings and 2) creating a suite of Kama treasures and treatises. This section examines the one cycle of treasures that Longsel Nyingpo composed at Katok to uncover rhetorical moves that indicate he attempted to interface with Katok's Kama heritage. This following analysis can be seen more broadly as a contribution to the study of the development of particular treasure traditions in their unique institutional settings.

Prior to arriving at Katok Longsel had already discovered over one dozen cycles of treasures. The meditational and protective deities featured in his different treasure cycles covered the usual pantheon of most treasure cycles, including the Fierce Guru (*gu ru drag po*), The Great Compassionate One, Eight Dispensations (*bka' brgyad*), ḍākinīs, long life deities, and others. During his early treasure career Longsel Nyingpo's audience had been primarily non-monastic and non-scholastic. His biographical record, while being fragmentary, says that his home base was a

small temple, he spent time at various retreats, and interacted with Mongolian princes. None of the sources mention him working at an institution comparable to Katok; a monastery with a long history of monasticism and devotion to the Kama. Thus it is no accident that the single cycle of treasures he discovered at Katok – *for* Katok – was about the Secret Nucleus, the iconic Mahāyoga suite of tantras of the Nyingma Kama. Longsel's Katok cycle of treasures is called the Cycle of the Distilled Secret of the Magical Net (*sgyu 'phrul gsang ba yang khol gyi skor*).[133] None of Longsel's earlier treasures overtly reference the Kama in their titles.

Many elements of the first half of Longsel's strategy to integrate his treasures at Katok are evident in a dated colophon to one of his Secret Nucleus compositions, the "Detailed Instructions on the Stages of the Path" (*lam rim pra khrid*). The text reads,[134]

> The (preceding) completes the teaching on the path and fruit – together with the standards for evaluating the signs (of accomplishment) – of the textual tradition of the great Magical Net. At dawn on the new years day of the wood-ox year (1685) when I was staying in Dam(pa Deshek's) cave I encountered around one hundred meaningful dohas –

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[133] This cycle is found in volume 10 of Longsel Nyingpo's *Collected Treasures* in 12 volumes.

[134] Longsel Nyingpo, Detailed Instructions on the Stages of the Path (sgyu 'phrul drwa ba chen po'i bskyed rdzogs zung 'jug gi khog dbub lam rim pra khrid), 199-202; 'di dag gis sgyu 'phrul drwa ba chen po'i gzhung gi lam 'bras bur tags tshad dang bcas pa bstan zin to/ 'di yang shing glang lo gsar dus skabs su dam phug tu 'dug skabs tho rangs shig rgya gar mkhas pa nyer gcig gi don do ha rdo rje'i glu lta bu brgya tsam mjal ba dang/ phyir nyin gyi tho rangs gnyis brgya tsam mjal ba bzo med skabs/ shar phyogs ngos nam mkha' na dkyil 'khor brgya tsam gyi mdangs bdag la zug pa bzo med skabs/ 'jig rten skyong bas ci ltar na ba'i sman gang yin pa ni/ sgyu 'phrul brgyad cu pa las yod zhes bya bas rgyud la rtogs pa zla ba bzhi tsam la nyams dang rmi lam thams cad du bar ma chad pa rgyud don rtogs pa byung bas bris pa'o/ …gnas 'dir bstan pa'i byi dor gsal phyir du/ kaH thog rdo rje'i gdan du legs par byas.

> which were like adamantine songs – of twenty-one Indian scholars. At dawn the next day I encountered about two hundred (doha), while in an unfabricated state (*bzo med skabs*). I was penetrated by the radiance of hundreds of maṇḍalas in the eastern part of the sky, while in an unfabricated state. I heard it said, "The Eighty-Chapter Magical Net is the medicine that the world guardians (use to heal) everyone that ails." For about 4 months I continuously had realizations of the meaning of the tantra in all of my meditative experiences and dreams, and then composed (this work). ...In order to clean up (*byi dor*) the teachings here in this holy place (*gnas*) I composed this at Katok, the vajrāsana.

This colophon addresses Katok and its traditions in several ways. For one the revelation that inspired the composition of this text is literally grounded at Katok, taking place in Dampa's cave. This cave has a long history in the mythic imagination of Katok as the meditation cave of the founder of the monastery. Longsel's use of the cave for his meditations (at least in the narrative, if not in real life) suggests that he was trying to accrue to himself the spiritual pedigree and power associated with the cave. He could have set such a major visionary experience in a new sacred site at Katok that he founded, but instead chose to align himself with this sign of the old Katok and its earlier traditions. This act also has an inverse function. By doing retreats in the cave and writing treatises in it he is also resacralizing the cave with his charisma.

A similar process is at work in Longsel's appropriation of the Secret Nucleus tantras. Longsel portrays himself as being informed directly by Indian panditas about the great pancea of the Secret Nucleus in Eighty Chapters, thereby showing that he shares the older Katok tradition's devotion to the Secret Nucleus, and by extension to the entire Kama. Yet he also makes these teachings his own, to some degree, through claiming continuous "realizations of the meaning of the tantra" for four months. After asserting that he is a master of the Secret Nucleus, Longsel then speaks with authority in saying that his composition is intended to purify the teachings at Katok. In this colophon, the longest and most detailed of any in his Secret Nucleus cycle, Longsel deftly represents himself as having inherited the Kama (with the Secret Nucleus as a representative of the Kama) and then having mastered it to such a degree that he is now in a position to reform the Dharma training at Katok.

Longsel's self-representation as an inheritor and master of the Secret Nucleus tantras actually begins earlier in this same text, the *Detailed Instructions on the Stages of the Path*. This long work has three sections, the first of which is called, "The introductory narrative meant to generate enthusiasm which covers the historical periods (of the Teachings)" (*spro ba bskyed pa gleng gzhi'i lo rgyus kyi rim pa*).[135] In

[135] The second section is entitled "The mode of engagement by means of a method endowed with the seven characteristics" (*mtshan nyid bdun dang ldan pa'i sgo nas ji ltar 'jug pa'i tshul).* The third section is entitled "A presentation of the ground, path, and fruition" (*gzhi lam 'bras bu'i rnam gzhag*). This last section is a substantial 120-folio long. It is a learned treatise almost indistinguishable from something written by a lama in the Katok abbatial lineage. The text has a very dense and complicated structure, with a new section heading to cover each of the hundreds of point of the treatise, and an equal number of quotes from sūtras, śastras, and tantras. There is actually very little explanatory prose by Longsel (or his ghost writer). The vast majority of sub-sections, sub-sub-sections, and so on, consist of just a heading announcing the topic and a

this section Longsel gives the lineal histories for several different teaching traditions, including the teaching lineages concerning the Kama teachings of the Eighteen Great Tantras of the Mahāyoga (*tan+tra chen po bco brgyad*). Longsel itemizes the lines of teachers for three sub-lines in the transmission of the Eighteen Great Tantras; namely, the lines of the tantras, the esoteric instructions (*man ngag*), and the detailed instructions of the Magical Illusion (*sgryu 'phrul pra khrid*).[136] Longsel is at the head of all three. In doing so Longsel is recreating his image as a master of these long human-to-human Kama lineages, as an inheritor of the teachings of figures such as Nubchen Sangye Yeshe (*gnubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes*; ninth century), Longchenpa (*klong chen rab 'byams pa;* 1308-1364), Dampa Deshek, and other greats of tantric exegesis in the Nyingma tradition. It is my contention that Longsel inscribed himself into these lineages in response to a perceived need on his part to assimilate some to the Katok traditions, but on his own terms.

In the colophon excerpted above Longsel Nyingpo expresses concern for "cleaning up" the teachings (*bstan pa'i byi dor*) at Katok. This is relevant to the consideration of how Longsel intended his Secret Nucleus treasures and writings to be used at Katok. Longsel's Secret Nucleus cycle appears to be a more or less cohesive set of texts that would have a broad utility both in terms of ritual practice, contemplation, and scholastic study of the Kama. Perhaps part of Longsel's strategy

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pertinent cited quotation. He almost never explains a topic in his own words or amplifies an excerpt from scripture.

[136] Ibid., 69.1-72.6. Interestingly, the lineage of lamas who have transmitted the tantras bypasses the Katok lamas. The latter two lineages – those of the oral instructions and detailed instructions – pass through Dampa Deshek and later Katok figures.

to purify the dharma at Katok was to compose a suite of treasures and treatises on the Secret Nucleus that could become a new pillar of Katok liturgy, meditation, and tantric study. Below I will give brief descriptions of the texts in Longsel's Secret Nucleus cycle.

The Secret Nucleus cycle appears in the tenth volume of his *Collected Revelations and Writings*, which also contains some miscellaneous texts that have not been neatly separated from the Secret Nucleus works. Longsel's Secret Nucleus works are composed of some revealed treasures and a few texts that he claims are his own compositions. The first text of the cycle is the initiation liturgy, followed by a "stages of meditation" text, and then the root tantra.[137] The root tantra is a treasure and begins with several letters of ḍākinī script and has treasure punctuation (*gter shad*) throughout. Perhaps as an allusion to the Magical Net in Eighty Chapters, the root tantra of his Secret Nucleus cycle contains eight chapters. The chapter titles are not lifted directly from the extant versions of the tantra but each of them has its equivalent in the canonical versions.

The fourth and fifth texts in the Secret Nucleus volume appear to be a pair. The fourth text – the Detailed Instructions on the Stages of the Path introduced above – covers the framework (*khog dbub*) of the stages of meditation on the Secret Nucleus. It is a very learned work in which a dense structure supports dozens of pages of scriptural citations from the *Collected Tantras of the Ancients*. The fifth text

[137] In order, these three texts are the gsang ba sgyu 'phrul gyi dbang chog myong grol ye shes chu rgyun (8 ff.), klong gsal sgyu 'phrul sgom rim (9 ff.), and sgyu 'phrul drwa ba gsang ba'i snying po gsang ba yang gsang gi rgyud (10 ff.).

is something of an outline of the preceding labyrinthine work. [138] The Secret Nucleus treasure cycle also contains a trilogy called the Aide -Memoire of the Vehicles, Excellent Path of Clarification (*theg pa'i gsal 'debs gsal ba'i lam bzang*).[139] After a few miscellaneous titles the volume concludes with a maṇḍala liturgy for the Secret Nucleus.[140]

Longsel's attempts to compose a set of treasures that would directly speak to Katok's longstanding commitments to the Kama suggest that during his stay he encountered pressure from some at Katok, or in the broader Nyingma community, to preserve to some degree what was unique about the monastery. If this is correct then the way Longsel found to do so was through the medium of Treasures. He repackaged a single Kama teaching as a treasure, and in the process rebranded himself (partially) as a master of the Secret Nucleus. For some reason, despite Longsel's stated intention to reform the teachings at Katok through his extensive revelations and writings on the Secret Nucleus, it is certain that the teachings did not become a central part of the Katok tradition after Longsel's time. They *may* have been prominent in the immediate aftermath of Longsel's time at Katok but by the end

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[138] sgyu 'phrul gsang ba yang khol las: man ngag gsal ba'i spra khrid gnad kyis mdo chings: v. 10, 8 ff. (pp. 203-218)

[139] The first of the three is a short four-folia root text that devotes a few lines to each of the nine vehicles and sub-vehicles. This root text is then expanded upon in the following two texts of the trilogy. The first of these is fourteen-folia long and the second is forty-eight-folia long. Just like the Detailed Instructions on the Stages of the Path, these two commentaries brim with scriptural citations.The Tibetans names of the three texts in this trilolgy are: *theg pa'i gsal 'debs gsal ba'i lam bzang*, *theg pa'i gsal 'debs gsal ba'i lam bzang don gsal nor bu'i phreng ba bka' 'dus zab rgya rdo rje'i snying po*, and *theg pa'i gsal 'debs gsal ba'i lam bzang gi don gsal rin po che'i phreng ba.*

[140] rang byung gsang ba snying po'i dkyil 'khor: v. 10, 31 ff. (pp. 651-712)

of the eighteenth century they seem to be completely marginal to the Katok curricula. Rather, Longsel's earlier works became popular at Katok, not the treasures he composed at Katok itself. The three treasures of Longsel's that became the most widely practiced and recited at Katok are the *Fierce Guru Blazing Wisdom* (*bla ma drag po ye shes rab 'bar*), *Indestructible Essence of Clear Expanse* (*klong gsal rdo rje snying po*), *The Unexcelled Super-Secret Form of Great Compassionate One* (*thugs rje chen po yang gsang bla med*), and *Gathering of All the Sugatas of the Eight Pronouncements* (*bka' brgyad bde gshegs yongs 'dus*). Chapter Four examines in detail Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita's codification of several of Longsel's treasures, which Getsé makes central to the liturgical and contemplative program of the Katok of his time.

The Administration of Katok by Longsel and His Descendants

Longsel's period at Katok represents a watershed moment in the history of the administration of the monastery. For one, Longsel's appointment at Katok by the king of Degé came at the expense of the Drungpa lamas, who had been in control of Katok for many generations. Furthermore Longsel brought with him numerous family members who succeeded him after he passed. Longsel also began, perhaps unwittingly, another administrative trend at Katok that would later come to predominate at the monastery: the rule by reincarnated lamas. Below I will profile some of the Longsel's relatives who ruled Katok in the first generations after Longsel's passing. These family member's of Longsel's shared power, though without

any clearly defined and sequential succession of power. The three most important figures who immediately succeeded Longsel are his younger brother, his nephew, and his son.

Longsel's younger brother was named Trashi Özer (*bkra shis 'od zer*) and he seems to have been Longsel's main administrative assistant at the monastery[141]. He stands out from among all the other relatives because he was a fully-ordained monk. For instance, Khenpo Jamyang's contemporary history lists him as the first successor to Longsel who served as abbot for many years. Trashi Ozer took full ordination under the eleventh Drungpa Rinchen Bummé (*rin chen 'bum me*), and was also a disciple of Dündül Dorjé. While at Katok he is said to have propagated Dündül Dorjé and Longsel Nyingpo's treasures. He died at age sixty-three but the exact year of his death is unknown.

Longsel's primary "treasure master" was his nephew Orgyen Lhündrup (*dbon o rgyan lhun grub).*[142] As the treasure master he actively promoted Longsel's treasures. For instance he went to Lhasa to meet the Fifth Dalai Lama and gain his approval of the treasures. Dündül had early presented his works to the Great Fifth for his support but had no success. Longsel, who was obviously much more diplomatic than his teacher, might have learned a lesson from Dündül's problems and carefully avoided criticism about the Ganden Podrang in his treasures. The year of Orgyan

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[141] Jamyang Gyeltsen, *Brief History of Katok,* 90-91.

[142] Ibid., 91

Lhündrup's trip to Lhasa is not known but it is suggested in Khenpo Jamyang's *History* that he went after Longsel's death in 1692.[143]

The third immediate successor to Longsel at Katok was his son, Sönam Deutsen.[144] He was the reincarnation of Dündül Dorjé and was born very soon after the latter's death in 1672. Sönam Deutsen trained under his father (who passed away when Sönam Deutsen son was twenty-years old) and other lamas such as Dzokchen Pema Rindzin. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Longsel Nyingpo wrote in his will that Sönam Deutsen should go to Dzokchen Monastery to sit at the feet of Pema Rindzin and study Dzokchen. Sönam Deutsen also made a pilgrimage to Central Tibet to study with the new luminaries of the Nyingma world, Terdak Lingpa (*gter bdag gling* pa; 1646-1714) of Mindröl Ling Monastery and Pema Trinlé (*pad+ma ’phrin las*; 1641-1717) of Dorjé Drak Monastery. The great eighteenth-century translator, proponent of classical learning, and Karma Kagyü hierarch Situ Penchen (*sit u paN chen;* 1700-1774) recounts meeting Sönam Deutsen in 1711 when the former was twelve years old.[145] Situ says that Sönam Deutsen visited his area and gave an initiation to the gathered crowd. When Sönam Deutsen asked for a clay pot to use in the ceremony someone brought him a vase that was not clean. He became angry and threw the clay pot out the window and it landed on a pile of rocks. If an

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[143] If Orgyen Lhundrup did indeed travel to Lhasa after Longsel's death then it becomes impossible that he would have actually met the Fifth Dalai Lama, who died in 1682 but whose death was kept from the public until 1696.

[144] Ibid., 91-92.

[145] Situ Penchen, Autobiography and Diaries, 25.6.

unenlightened person had done such a thing the pot would have broken on impact. When the charismatic lama Sönam Deutsen threw the pot out of the window in a fit of so-called enlightened wrath the clay vessel landed without a scratch. Situ says that upon seeing this display of Longsel's son's supernatural powers gained through tantric contemplation, he came to honor the lama. Thus we see that Sönam Deutsen was sufficiently charismatic to travel in the general Degé area and be accepted as a holy lama. Unfortunately he died young at the age of forty-nine. Thus he may not have met his potential of service to Katok in this lifetime, but his reincarnation Drimé Zhingkyong Gompo (1724-1786) was a pivotal figure of the next generation. The next two chapters covers Drimé Zhingkyong in great detail.

Other relatives of Longsel also had an impact on Katok. His nephew Orgyan Namdröl (*o rgyan rnam grol*) went to Central Tibet, perhaps with Sönam Deutsen, and studied with the head lamas of Mindröl Ling and Dorjé Drak monasteries.[146] There he learned the monastic performing arts, especially masked dance and choir. Khenpo Jamyang praises Orgyan Namdröl for having transmitted these arts back to Katok, where they are maintained to this day.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed a period in the history of Katok that represents a striking break with the past and skillful approaches to the future. After its rise in the middle of seventeenth century, the Degé royal court heavily patronized Nyingma

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[146] Jamyang Gyeltsen, *History of Katok*, 91.

lamas and monasteries in Dege. This was possible in part because seventeenth-century Kham was home to a number of prolific and influential Nyingma lamas such as Dündül Dorjé and his students. Degé integrated its support for the Nyingma tradition into its governance of the polity through collaborating with its court lamas in the founding or revival of monasteries in strategic locations. Katok Monastery was particularly affected by the interventions of the Degé court. The new powers wanted Katok to thrive but it appears that they also wanted to have the upper hand in the region. Therefore they confiscated the monastery's landholdings and imposed their own lama at the head of the monastery. Then Degé imposed on the monastery a lay treasure revealer, representing a major departure from the preceding five hundred years of rule by, ideally, monks who were proponents of the Kama. From this point on the monastery was in a partnership with Degé whereby the kingdom provided authorization to operate and some financial support, and the lamas of the monastery contributed to the ritual needs of the government.

Longsel Nyingpo impacted the monastery through his introduction of new teachings and administrators. Certain of the treasures he introduced at the monastery took deep root and have remained a prominent part of the contemplative and liturgical programs at Katok to this day. However the religious traditions at Katok were not completely passive in receiving the new material introduced by Longsel. Rather, Katok's long history exerted an effect on Longsel. After his arrival at the monastery he apparently felt compelled to "discover" a new cycle of treasures that referenced the earlier Katok traditions based on the Kama. Furthermore Longsel

Nyingpo changed the administration at the monastery by placing his family members and students at the helm of the monastery. Longsel's blood relations retained control of the monastery for several generations, after which the reincarnations of Longsel's children and students came to dominate.

The dramatic changes in the local politics that accompanied the rise of Degé could have been devastating for Katok Monastery. If the royal court had appointed a less diplomatic and creative treasure revealer to the see of Katok then the monastery might have collapsed and been overshadowed by Pelyül or Dzokchen. But later chapters of this study show that while the changes brought to the monastery by Longsel were not entirely free of controversy they did provide the basis for institutional stability and further innovation. Economically Longsel was able to work well with the new regime, and over a century and a half after his arrival in Degé he was immortalized in the 1828 *Genealogy of the Kings of Degé* for having revealed the royal seal.

The following chapter will chronicle a major pushback against the changes Longsel brought to Katok's religious praxis and administration. This pushback was spearheaded by Katok Rindzin Tsewang Norbu (1798-1755), who Longsel Nyingpo's son Sönam Deutsen recognized as the reincarnation of one of his father's students. Tsewang Norbu considered Katok's authentic tradition to consist of scholastic study of the Kama, monasicism, and meritocratic succession, and he believed that during the Drung and Longsel periods this tradition had been lost. His strategy for reviving

the lost tradition was itself very controversial and Katok's lamas and monks ultimately rejected it.

Chapter Two: A Mid Eighteenth-Century Attempt to Reform Katok Monastery

This chapter seeks to answer the questions: How did the changes at Katok instituted by Longsel Nyingpo and his successors transpire at Katok in the decades after Longsel's death in 1692? Did any partisans of the older Kama traditions object to the changes that had occurred to the monastery's religious programs and administration since the arrival of Longsel? If so how were their reactions expressed? What solutions were proposed and attempted? What were the outcomes?

The historical record does in fact register one major pushback against the changes brought to Katok by Longsel Nyingpo as well as the subsequent custodianship of the monastery by his son and nephews. Katok Rindzin Tsewang Norbu (*kaH thog rig 'dzin tshe dbang nor bu*, 1698-1755), who came of age in the early eighteenth century, yearned for Katok's earlier traditions and was not happy that Katok's Kama heritage had been eclipsed by the newly introduced treasure traditions. Furthermore, he was very concerned about what he perceived as the poor management of the monastery by Longsel's descendants, which he saw as an inevitable result of the ascendancy of hereditary and reincarnate lamas in the monastery's administration. In the early 1750s Tsewang Norbu orchestrated a brief and failed opposition to the treasure-centric regime at Katok. This chapter begins

with an overview of Tswewang Norbu's life and then analyzes in detail his dramatic campaign to install a new leader at Katok monastery.

Katok Rindzin Tsewang Norbu

Tsewang Norbu (1698 -1755) is one of the greatest lamas of the eighteenth century. He was the Seventh Dalai Lama's primary diplomat in the Himalayas, a power broker in the Karma Kagyü sect, reviver of dying teaching lineages, renovator of ancient Buddhist sites in Nepal and Tibet and renowned author.[147] Tsewang Norbu is beloved by later historians for his excellent works on early Tibetan history and biographical writings about his own life and times.[148] His religious career began, however, as a reincarnate lama of Katok monastery and was known throughout his life as the "Katok Rindzin" (the *vidyadhara* of Katok).

Biographical Writings By and About Tsewang Norbu

The historical record for Tsewang Norbu is rich and detailed, albeit fragmented. He wrote several autobiographical accounts at different stages of his life but never a comprehensive life story. The first autobiography is called the *Supreme Medication for the Fever* ([*of Samsara*] *ri thang mtshams kyi sman mchog*) and was written in the fall of 1718 when the author was twenty -one years old. Its three

[147] Traditional accounts of his life speak of four great deeds, which include one activity not mentioned in the preceding list. In addition to peacemaking, reviving fragile Jonang and Shangpa Kagyü lineages, and renovating ancient Buddhist monuments, they remember him for also eradicating a violent tradition in Nepal in which women were buried alive (*gson dur*); Pema Wangchen Dorjé, *Brief Account of the Author's Life* (*mdzad pa po'i lo rgyus mdor bsdu*), 13 and 16.

[148] Richardson, "A Tibetan Antiquarian in the XVIIIth Century."

chapters cover Tsewang Norbu's past lives, the prophecies that confirm his present spiritual stature, his youth, and his works to benefit beings. The work is written in prose with frequent insertion of verse pieces written at different times during the author's life.[149] In the 1720s Tsewang Norbu wrote four works redolent of the "secret autobiography" genre. They attest to his robust pursuit of meditation in his mid-to-late twenties and early thirties.[150] In the spring of 1730, at age thirty-three, Tsewang Norbu wrote a medium length autobiography in lines of seven-syllable metered verse.[151] The terse style makes it difficult to identify many of the proper nouns mentioned therein. The work does, though, bring the reader up to date on his travels and studies since his last "outer" autobiography (written in 1718). Tsewang Norbu did not compose another autobiography for another twenty years. In 1751, while engaged in peacemaking in Ladakh and elsewhere in the Himalayas, Tsewang Norbu wrote a final life story covering the years 1749-1752.[152] In addition to these life

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[149] The last event described in the work is his unsuccessful trip to meet the treasure revealer Rolpé Dorjé. Towards the end of this autobiography Tsewang Norbu analogizes his frustrated desire to meet the treasure revealer with the torment a person dying of thirst feels for water that is out of reach. This is a tragic ending because unbeknownst to Tsewang Norbu this lama would die the following year before the former could meet him.

[150] The four autobiographies about his esoteric experiences in the 1720s are: 1) snyigs dus ser gzugs snyom las mkhan gyur tshe dbang nor bu bdag nyid gangs ri'i ljongs kyi yul gru du mar rgyu tshul lam yig phyi nang gsang ba kho na nyid kyi glu dbyangs sna tshogs pad+ma'i phreng ba, 2) snyigs dus rnal 'byor gzugs 'dzin sprang ban tshe dbang nor bu bdag nyid phyogs kun rgyu ba'i rtogs brjod las 'phro skyo shas glu dbyangs sna tshogs pad+ma'i phreng ba (269-299), 3) rnal 'byor pa tshe dbang nor bu'i rgyun spyod dge ba'i lam rim glu ru blags pa thar pa'i 'jug ngog (300-306), and 4) nar ma'i rnal 'byor sdom tshig rdo rje'i phreng ba zhes nyams len snying po'i rmi yig gong khug ma (307). Two versions of this last work are included in the LTWA mss. edition. The second of the two is one folio longer the earlier.

[151] The full Tibetan title is ma bcos pa'i zog po sngags rig 'dzin pa tshe dbang nor bu rang nyid spyad rabs las chu klung las thigs pa tsam kyu ru lugs su smos pa snyim pa'i chu skyes, 234-255.

[152] Or more properly, the earth snake year through the iron sheep year (sa sbrul nas lcags lug bar). rig pa 'dzin pa tshe dbang nor bu'i rang nyid kyi spyad rabs las phyung ba lu ma nas snyim pa'i chu ltar sa bon tsam zhig smon pa 'di zhugs so/_sa sbrul nas lcags lug bar (531-559). For more on this period of Tsewang

stories, biographical details are found in the many letters Tsewang Norbu wrote to politicians and high lamas in the early 1750s.[153] Tsewang Norbu died in Western Tibet 1755.

The preceding autobiographies are a treasure trove of information about Tsewang Norbu's activities and motivations. These life-writings are complemented by two excellent biographies written several decades after Tsewang Norbu's death. The author is Chökyi Wangchuk, the reincarnated lama (trülku; *sprul sku*) of Drakkar Taso Monastery (*brag dkar rta so sprul sku chos kyi dbang phyug*; 1775-1837) in Kyirong (*skyid grong*). The chief biography is a long and detailed work that spans 188 folia in cursive script. Its concise title is the *Amazing Sea of Enjoyment for the Faithful* (*ngo mtshar dad pa'i rol mtsho*). Chökyi Wangchuk uses all of the aforementioned autobiographical writings to great effect in this biography. When possible he gives lucid prose accounts of periods of Tsewang Norbu's life, and then follows these sections with extended excerpts from the much more opaque versified autobiographies. Towards the end of the *Amazing Sea of Enjoyment for the Faithful* Chökyi Wangchuk interpolates the entire text of the autobiography that covers the years 1749-1751, without adding explanations or commentary of any kind. Chökyi Wangchuk also incorporates oral traditions into Tsewang Norbu's biography, stating that he only utilized those that he heard directly from great lamas.[154] Chökyi

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Norbu's life see Schwieger, "Kathog Rigzin Tsewang Norbu's diplomatic mission to Ladakh in the eighteenth century."

[153] His collected letters are found in the *Collected Letters* (*chab shog khag*).

[154] Chökyi Wangchuk, Amazing Sea of Enjoyment for the Faithful, 157.

Wangchuk points out broader trends in Tsewang Norbu's life and gives the reader the full names of the places, people, and texts that the subject often mentions only in very truncated forms in his autobiographical writings. The second biography of Tsewang Norbu is a short prose work that is only six pages long in the new computer-font hardback edition.[155] A full treatment of this biographical literature and Tsewang Norbu's life story – not to mention his Buddhist and historical writings - is beyond the purview of this chapter.

Tsewang Norbu's Involvement with Nyingma Teachings and Institutions

Katok Rindzin Tsewang Norbu was born in 1698[156] and came of age during a tumultuous period in Tibetan history – the Dzungar destruction of Nyingma centers in southern Tibet, political instability in Lhasa, Qing acquisition of much of Kham, and so on – and valiantly intervened on multiple political fronts to try to make peace and preserve endangered Buddhist traditions. His birthplace was Sangen County (*sa ngan*) in Degé, now in Gonjo County, the Tibetan Autonomous Region.[157] In his autobiographies Tsewang Norbu identifies his homeland as Jang Chushi (*ljang chu gshis*), the Jang River. The Jang is likely a tributary of the Drichu. A recent profile of Tsewang Norbu calls his birthplace Rekhé Sangen (*re khe sa ngan*) and specifies that

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[155] Tsewang Norbu, *Collected Writings,* vol. 1, 159-164.

[156] He was born very close in time to several lamas who would go on to be key figures in Degé's mid-eighteenth century golden age. Zhuchen Tsultrim Rinchen (*zhu chen tshul khrims rin chen*) – chief editor of the Degé Tengyur – was born in 1696; Situ Penchen – chief editor of the Degé Kangyur – was born in 1700; Ngorchen Palden Chökyong (*ngor chen dpal ldan chos skyong*) – influential court chaplain – was born in 1702. Tsewang Norbu was a close associate of Situ Penchen from the 1720s until the end of his life.

[157] Jangsum (*byang gsum* 雄松) Township, Gonjo County, TAR.

it lies on the left side of the Jang River.[158] In the colophons to his writings he frequently identifies himself as "the one from the south of Katok." This is a reference to a prophesy from Jatson Nyingpo about his birth and great deeds.[159] Indeed Jangchushi is the southwest of Katok.

Tsewang Norbu's family belonged to the Go clan, the same clan as the Degé royal family. Nevertheless they were not royalty and his family seems to have been quite poor. His autobiographies make a couple mentions of his family being destitute and needing to frequently move around in search of sustenance. Once Tsewang Norbu was identified as a trülku, though, the family's finances improved.

In his youth Tsewang Norbu was ensconced in communities that upheld the treasures traditions of Dündül Dorje and Longsel Nyingpo. Treasure revealer, and close student of Longsel, Pema Dechen Lingpa (1627 -1713) identified Tsewang Norbu as a trülku at age seven, and remained a huge influence on him throughout his life.[160] At age thirteen (1710) Tsewang Norbu reunited with Pema Dechen Lingpa

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[158] Pema Wangchen Dorjé, *Brief Account of the Author's Life*, 13. This area also has two other names, the first of which is the Riwo Trazang of Kham. This is a reference to Riwo Trazang in western Tibet, the site where Rindzin Gökyi Dentruchen (*rgod kyi ldem 'phru can*; 1337-1409) – originator of the Dorjé Drak treasures – discovered the keys to his three sets of treasures. Its second name is Tsenri Dorjédrak (also known as Tsengöd Ritra; *btsan rgod ri bkra*), a further reference to Dorjédrak. Nevertheless during Tsewang Norbu's time the area was inhabited by many treasure revealers that do not seem to be connected to Dorjédrak Monastery and its treasures. Rather, many lamas affiliated with Katok treasures lived in the area during Tsewang Norbu's childhood.

[159] Tsewang Norbu references this prophecy in many colophons. The full text of the original prophesy is given in Ibid., 13-14.

[160] A concise story of Pema Dechen Lingpa's life is found in Kongtrül Yonten Gyatso, *Lives of the Hundred Treasure-finders*, 619.1-622.3 Pema Dechen Lingpa was born in 1663 (*chu yos*) in Amdo. His homeland is named Gongti (*gong ti*), and lies between Ser(ta?) and Do(drupchen?) in Amdo (*mdo smad gser rdo gnyis kyi mtshams*). At age twenty Pema Dechen Lingpa went to central Tibet on pilgrimage. At age twenty-one – presumably back in Amdo – he met the Serpa lama Yeshé Gyaltsen (*gser pa bla ma ye shes rgyal mtshan*). This lama taught him advanced tantric yogas, which he then mastered during seven years of

and received his Dzokchen teachings. He also met and became a student of Kelzang Orgyen Tenzin (skal bzang o rgyan bstan 'dzin), a nephew of his "previous incarnation," the Tak lama Pema Norbu. The next year Tsewang Norbu also met Longsel Nyingpo's son Sönam Deutsen for the first time.

Tsewang Norbu met Pema Dechen Lingpa and Kelzang Orgyen Tenzin again in his fifteenth year. The following year (1713) Pema Dechen Lingpa died. Tsewang Norbu remained committed to his root lama's treasure cycles and would later give their initiations throughout the Tibetan cultural world. In his late teens Tsewang Norbu also experimented with revealing his own treasures. However, in the autobiography about his youth – the *Supreme Medication for the Fever* – he expresses an initial ambivalence about his treasure revelation abilities. At one point

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intensive practice. These efforts culminated in a transformative event during Pema Dechen Lingpa's twenty-fifth year in which he received a prophecy and registry for a cycle of treasures. Following the dictates of those mystical documents he secretly traveled to Gyalrong (*rgyal mo shing gi rong*), in the far east of Kham. From a boulder on which gathered 100,000 ḍākiṇīs in the middle of the great holy place Mudo (*gnas chen dmu rdo mkha' 'gro 'bum 'dus kyi pha waM*) in Gyalrong Pema Dechen Lingpa extracted his most well-known treasure cycle – the Longsel Khandro Nyingtik (*klong gsal mkha' 'gro snying thig*). At age twenty-seven (about 1669) he went to Katok and met with Longsel Nyingpo. They formed a very close relationship and Longsel appointed Pema Dechen Lingpa one of his "regents" (*rgyal tshab*). Among the other teachers Pema Dechen Lingpa trained under is the Tak lama Pema Norbu, also a student of Longsel Nyingpo. Pema Dechen Lingpa recognized the young Tsewang Norbu to be the reincarnation of the Tak lama Pema Norbu. Three years later, when Pema Dechen Lingpa was thirty years old he met another great treasure revealer based in Kham, Tagsham Nüden Dorjé (*stag sham nus ldan rdo rje*). The meeting took place in Pema Dechen Lingpa's adopted home region of Tsenri (*btsan ri*) and Taksham transmitted to him all his treasure cycles.

Pema Dechen Lingpa's treasure site Mudo, in present-day Rongdrak County (*rong brag rdzong*) in Kardzé Prefecture, has long been a Nyingma (and possibly Bön) sacred site and place of treasure activity. Karma Gyeltsen's recently published anthology of pilgrimage guides for sacred sites in Kham contains three separate works about Mudo. The first two texts are compositions of one Trülku Sangyé Lingpa, who is certainly not the great fourteenth century revealer of the Lama Gongdü (*bla ma dgongs 'dus*). They are the *shar rgyal mo dmu rdo'i gsol 'debs* (attributed in the colophon to the eighth century translator Vairocana, who was exiled to Gyalrong and is associated with Mudo's mythology; 374) and the shar rgyal mo dmu rdor skor ba'i phan yon zur bkod (pp. 375-378). The third pilgrimage text about Mudo is by Nyakla Jangchub Dorjé's (*nyag bla byang chub rdo rje*; fl. early 20th cent.) pilgrimage guide and inventory of Mudo, the *rgyal mo rong gi gnas chen dmu rdo.* It was also published in 1992 as a pamphlet (W21638).

he even composed a volume of treasures, and then burned them.[161] At age twenty-one Tsewang Norbu committed to writing some revelations that he liked and they are now part of his surviving *Collected Works*.[162] In the fall of the same year, during the Descent From Heaven holiday (*lha bab dus chen*), Tsewang Norbu traveled to Katok for the first time. At the great monastery Sönam Deutsen, himself a lay tantrist, gave Tsewang Norbu the ordination of a celibate layperson.[163] In fact Tsewang Norbu was never a monk, although he later became an advocate for the monastic revival in Kham in the middle of the eighteenth century.[164]

At age twenty-two, several years after the death of Pema Dechen Lingpa, Tsewang Norbu met with his late lama's son Pema Wangyal (*pad+ma dbang rgyal*). The latter requested Tsewang Norbu to write liturgies on their common teacher's treasure cycle, the Longsel Khandro Nyingtik, and he complied.[165] That year Tsewang Norbu also had a strong desire to meet the aging treasure revealer Rolpé

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[161] Tsewang Norbu, Supreme Medication for the Fever, 210: lo der yid la ma bsam rang shar gyi tshig thol thol du ma byung ba thugs gter gyi khul di yi ger bkod pas gu ru rak+sha thod phreng gi chos skor glegs bam chen por long tsam grub mtshams dgos med cig snying la shar nas me la sregs pa de dus rgyus yod kyi grwa pa yang mang.

[162] Chökyi Wangchuk, *Amazing Sea of Enjoyment for the Faithful,* 31. These treasures are called the Ḍākinī's Secret Path (*DAk+ki gsang lam*) and found in volume one of the new edition of his *Collected Works.* At age thirty Tsewang Norbu revealed another set of treasures, the Yangzab Upadeśa (*yang zab u pa de shaH*), also in volume one.

[163] Tsewang Norbu, Supreme Medication for the Fever, 221

[164] His own reflections on this will be excerpted in the next section.

[165] Chökyi Wangchuk, *Amazing Sea of Enjoyment for the Faithful,* 32. This text does not appear to be among his published works but two other titles on this cycle are extant: *klong gsal mkha' 'gro snying thig gis* [sic] *dkyil 'khor lha mtshan gsal bar phyes pa k eta ka yi thig so lta bu* (v. 2, pp. 475-476), and *klong gsal mkha' 'gro snying thig gi cha lag gi bsgrub pa'i tshe sgrub 'chi med rdo rje rgya mdud kyi bdag mdun bskyod bzlas bdag 'jug bcas kyi cho ga khrigs chags su bkod pa* (v. 2, pp. 482-490).

Dorjé (*rol pa'i rdo rje*), who was based in Zurmang (*zur mang*), but couldn't get across a river to meet him in the fall of that year. A few months later the great tertön died before Tsewang Norbu could make another attempt to see him.[166] This year in his life marks the end of the early phase of his training when he was involved nearly exclusively with the Nyingma treasure cult.

In the aftermath of the Dzungar invasion of central Tibet and their destruction of the great Nyingma monasteries of Mindroling and Dorjédrak (during which the Nyingma luminaries Lochen Dharmashri [*lo chen dar ma sh+ri;* 1654-1717] and Pema Trinlé [*pad+ma phrin las;* 1641 -1717] were assassinated), many important Nyingma lineage holders fled to eastern Tibet.[167] Among the refugees from whom Tsewang Norbu received teachings were two sons of Mindroling's founder Terdak Lingpa, Gyurmé Rinchen Namgyel (*'gyur med rin chen rnam rgyal*), Gyurmé Pema Zangpo or Gyatso (*'gyur med pad+ma bzang po/rgya mtsho).* From these representatives of the leading Nyingma monastery of the time Tsewang Norbu broadened his Nyingma training from the regional traditions of recent treasure revealers such as Dundül Dorjé, Longsel Nyingpo, Pema Dechen Lingpa, Rolpé Dorjé, and others to include treasures that were quickly gaining currency throughout the Nyingma world.[168] The lamas gave him many initiations and transmissions for

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[166] This unfortunate frustration of his plans is the last event chronicled in the *Supreme Medication for the Fever* (220-221).

[167] Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early XVIIIth Cenury*, 53-54; and Dalton, "The Uses of the *Dgongs Pa 'Dus Pa'i Mdo* in the Development of the Rnying-Ma School of Tibetan Buddhism," 239.

[168] Chökyi Wangchuk, Amazing Sea of Enjoyment for the Faithful, 40.

classic treasure cycles by Nyangrel Nyimé özer and Guru Chöwang, as well as many of Terdak Lingpa's New Treasures (*gter gsar*).

In his twenty-fourth year Tsewang Norbu returned to Katok for another meeting with Sönam Deutsen. This time the son of Longsel Nyingpo and leader of Katok enthroned Tsewang Norbu as one of his regents.[169] The enthronement was a testament to Tsewang Norbu's remarkable intelligence and charisma. He refused the appointment, though, for reasons pertaining to his avowal of the "vagabond" (*rgyal khams pa*) lifestyle.

After his mid-twenties Tsewang Norbu's involvement with Nyingma lamas and institutions dropped off. One reason for this is simply that his religious instruction began to wind down after that age and he instead began to travel and do intensive retreat. The other reason for the movement away from Nyingma teachings is that around this time Tsewang Norbu developed a fondness for Kagyü and Jonang teachings.[170] Tsewang Norbu's commitments to the Kagyü school will be discussed immediately below.

This brief survey of Tsewang Norbu's early training and involvement with Nyingma teachings and institutions has shown that he was raised in a milieu permeated by the teachings of Dundül Dorjé, Longsel Nyingpo and their students. Furthermore he was literally made heir to that tradition and invested with a position

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[169] Ibid., 42.

[170] It goes without saying that what was selected for inclusion here does not exhaust Tsewang Norbu's Nyingma activities. One issue left underdeveloped here is his conflicted relationship to his own treasure revelations and the literary and doctrinal qualities of the treasures themselves.

of authority at Katok monastery. Tsewang Norbu even bore the title Katok Rindzin. Nevertheless his varied religious commitments and peripatetic lifestyle took him far afield of Katok for much of his life. He did not return to the fray until the early 1750s.

Tsewang Norbu's Involvement with the Karma Kagyü sect

Tsewang Norbu also came to be a major figure in the Karma Kagyü sect. His involvement with the sect began simply as a curious advanced student who was looking for new contemplative instructions, and then gradually evolved into a position of great prominence in the sect. His affiliation with the Karma Kagyü school would come to the fore when Tsewang Norbu reestablished his connections with Katok towards the end of his life.

At age twentythree (1720) Tsewang Norbu traveled to Markham Wendzong (*smar khams dben rdzong*) to meet Zurmang Chetsang (*zur mang che tshang*).[171] The former lama's full name is Sungrap Gyatso (*gsung rab rgya mtsho*) and he was an incarnation in the Chetsang lineage based at the large Karma Kagyü institution of Zurmang monastery in Nangchen.[172] Tsewang Norbu was deeply impressed with this teacher and calls him his second "root lama."[173] During this first meeting Tsewang

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[171] Ibid., 36

[172] For more on this great monastery see *The History of Zurmang Lhündrupling* (*dpal bkra shis zur mang lhun grub gling gi lo rgyus*). The ninth section of this long work is a history of the Chetsang lineage, including a biography of Tsewang Norbu's teacher Sungrap Gyatso.

[173] Thus Sönam Deutsen, for all his hopes in Tsewang Norbu, is not considered by the latter to be one of his most important teachers. His first root lama, of course, was Pema Dechen Lingpa.

Norbu received many Kagyü and Nyingma teachings from him. It is no accident that this lama gave both Kagyü and Nyingma teachings. In general comments about the monasteries in this area, the author of *Guru Trashi's History* states that the local Kagyü monasteries in Nangchen were deeply involved in Nyingma tarditions. Ngawang Lodrö writes, "Glorious Riwoché (*ri bo che*) and the Zurmang monasteries ostensibly are great sees of the Kagyü teachings but in actual fact (the resident lamas) are all great keepers of the teachings of the supremely esoteric Nyingma."[174] The Autobiography A Lotus Cupped Between Your Hands (*snyim pa'i chu skyes*) records that Chetsang gave Tsewang Norbu many Mah āmudrā teachings and instructions on the *Wishfulfilling Gem Triad of Cakrasamvara* (*bde mchog yid bzhin nor bu skor gsum*).[175] In one of his shorter, more esoteric, autobiographical pieces Tsewang Norbu writes that these Kagyü practices helped him make great improvements in his meditation. He shares with the readers,[176]

> Previously my (meditation on) self-awareness, the essential state, was slightly harmed by drowsiness and torpor, (on the one hand and on the other,) wandering and excitement; and I was slightly do ubtful about

[174] Ngawang Lodrö, Guru Trashi's History, 750; dpal ri bo che dang/ zur mang ba rnams kyang bka' brgyud pa'i gdan sa chen po yin kyang don gyis gsang chen rnying ma'i bstan 'dzin chen po sha stag tu bzhugs pa yin no.

[175] This is a Drukpa Kagyü collection of Teachings; Cf. Padma-dkar-po. Bde Mchog Sñan Brgyud Nor Bu Skor Gsum: Collected Ancient Instructions for the Practice of the Orally Transmitted Teachings Focussing Upon Cakrasamvara By Various Masters of the Tradition. Palampur, Himachal Pradesh: Sungrab Nyamso Gyunphel Parkhang, 1985.

[176] Chökyi Wangchuk, Amazing Sea of Enjoyment for the Faithful, 37: rang gi yang rang rig gshis kyi ngo bo sngar dus su bying rmugs 'phro rgod kyis kyang cung zad gnod cing yin min gyi the tshom brang bring du yong ba de phyin re dogs the tshom rnam par dag ste sngar gyi nyams myong de 'phel 'grib cher mi 'gro bas brtan par gyur te/ dam pas kyang nyams rtogs zung 'jug gam zhi lhag zung 'jug tu ngo sprod de don la gong de rje btsun bde chen gling pas ngo sprod pa dang do mthun pa yin gsung.

> identifying it (i.e., self-awareness). Hereafter my hopes, fears, and doubts were purified and because the vicissitudes will not intensify my earlier meditative experiences stabilized. That which this holy one (Chetsang) introduced as the union of meditative experience and realization, or the union of calm abiding and special insight, is in agreement with what venerable Dechen Lingpa introduced (to me)."

In 1725 Tsewang Norbu traveled to Central Tibet. He had an audience with the twelfth Karmapa and eighth Zhamar.[177] The following year he met a Kagyü lama that he would accept as his third root lama, the third Trewo (*tre bo*) Rinpoché Karma Tendzin Dargyé (kar+ma bstan 'dzin dar rgyas; 1653-1730). This lama gave him several Kagyü teachings. More importantly, though, he introduced Tsewang Norbu to the Jonang tradition. Tsewang Norbu's involvement with the Jonang sect is worthy of a long study but is not immediately relevant here.[178]

Furthermore, the same year that he met Trewo Rinpoche (1726), Tsewang Norbu traveled to Western Tibet and Nepal for the first time. A full discussion of these trips far exceeds the purview of this dissertation. Suffice it to say that from this year on until his death in 1755 Tsewang Norbu spent much of his time in Western

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[177] The names of the two Karma Kagyü heirarchs are Karmapa Jangchup Dorjé (*kar+ma pa byang chub rdo rje*; 1703-1732) and Zhamar Pelchen Chökyi Döndrup (*zhwa dmar dpal chen chos kyi don drub*; 1695-1732)

[178] Cf. Stearns, *The Buddha From Dolpo*, Chapter Two, part three. Stearns used many of these sources for his excellent history of Tsewang Norbu's study and promotion of Jonang Other-Emptiness (*gzhan stong*) teachings.

Tibet and Nepal. In these regions he engaged in temple restoration, teaching, and peace making.[179]

In 1733 the Karmapa and Zhamar – the two highest-ranking lamas of the Karma Kagyü sect – died en route to China. This tragic event opened up a leadership vacuum in the sect and imposed upon the custodians of the sect major searches for two reincarnated lamas at the same time.[180] The strife that often attends the process of searching for and enthroning a reincarnate lama are legendary. Tsewang Norbu became very involved in the searches – alongside Situ Penchen – and in so doing raised his profile in the sect tremendously. It is fair to say that during this interregnum Tsewang Norbu became something of an interim manager of the Karma Kagyü sect. A contributing factor to his rise to prominence was that at this time Situ Penchen was extremely busy in Degé. Situ finished editing the Degé Kanjur in 1733 and then had to leave his Degé patrons in 1734 and 1735 to deal with the funerals of the Karmapa and Zhamar. Thus by 1736 and 1737 Situ was again obligated to stay in Degé to attend to the Degé royal family and build up his new monastery Palpung, which was founded in 1728.

Fortunately the recognition of the thirteenth Karmapa did not result in much conflict[181] and the lead candidate received the support of the king of Tibet,

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179 Tsewang Norbu's *Collected Works* contain a sufficient amount of material about this and it deserves to be the subject of its own study.

180 Smith, Among Tibetan Texts, 90-91.

181 Situ Penchen, *Autobiography,* 178.3; Situ was in Degé at the time of the recognition but heard from Tsewang Norbu that the main candidate was the clear choice: *rig 'dzin chen po'i bang mi bka' shog 'byor kar+ma pa'i sprul sku legs par gsal 'dug* (178.3).

Pholhané.[182] The thirteenth Karmapa was named Dundül Dorjé (1733/34 -1797) and enthroned in 1736.[183] Unlike the peaceful recognition and enthronement of the Karmapa, the recognition of the ninth Zhamar caused infighting similar to what we see now with the recognition struggles between the partisans of the two Karmapas in the present-day Tibetan community. Two rival claimants were proposed and in the end the candidate chosen by Situ and Tsewang Norbu was enthroned at Zhamar's home monastery of Yangpajen (*yangs pa can*). Much more will be said about the Zhamar lamas in the second half of this chapter.

Tsewang Norbu continued to be a major teacher and figure in the Karma Kagyü school until his death. His *Collected Works* are dominated by writings on Kagyü liturgies, contemplation, and history. One of the great Kagyü historical documents of the eighteenth century is his education dossier (*gsan yig*) of Kagyü teachings, a comprehensive record of the prominent and obscure Kagyü teachings and teachers in circulation in the eighteenth century.[184]

In summary, when in his early twenties Tsewang Norbu took an active interest in Karma Kagyü teachings that evolved into his long term and influential involvement in the sect. Furthermore Tsewang Norbu's involvement with the Kagyü sect seems to have been in inverse proportion with his dealings with Nyingma

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182 Chökyi Wangchuk, Amazing Sea of Enjoyment for the Faithful, 69.

183 For a short Tibetan-authored biography of the thirteenth Karmapa composed in English (?) see Thinley, *The History of the Sixteen Karmapas of Tibet,* Chapter Thirteen. From the very first paragraph of this account the role of Tsewang Norbu in the recognition of this lama is evident.

184 The full name of this work is lha rje mnyam med zla 'od gzhon nu'i bka' brgyud phyag chen gdams pa ji tsam nod pa'i rtogs brjod legs bshad rin chen 'byung khungs and it is found in Tsewang Norbu, Collected Works, Vol. 1, 367-400.

institutions and traditions during this time. Additionally Tsewang Norbu never returned to Kham after he left it in his early twenties. Thus Tsewang Norbu began his religious career as a reincarnated lama in a growing circle of reincarnated lamas affiliated with Longsel Nyingpo and Katok Monastery. He then left Kham and largely disengaged from the Nyingma sect for three decades while he a ttached himself to the Kagyü sect and cenral and western Tibetan politics. Then in his fifties Tsewang Norbu renewed his close involvement with Katok in pursuit of a drive to reform the monastery. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to a one or two year period in the early 1750s when Tsewang Norbu reconnected with Katok. He did not have the impact on Katok that he intended but his agenda and rhetoric illuminate the concerns of some Katok lamas who were displeased with the Longsel era at Katok.

Tsewang Norbu's Campaign to Reform Katok

Late in his life Tsewang Norbu became very concerned about the plight of Katok and took drastic measures to impose his vision of reform on Katok. Tsewang Norbu reacted to the changes introduced at Katok by Longsel Nyingpo and the state of Katok under the administration of his successors sixty years after the treasure revealer's death. Tsewang Norbu's rejection of some of the components of the the post-Longsel regime is the first recorded reaction away from or against the changes that had occurred at Katok in the preceding seventy -five years. This episode is important for the study of Katok monastery's history because Tsewang Norbu's campaign to reform Katok brings to the fore structural incongruities between the pre

and post Longsel periods at Katok. For this reason a sustained analysis of Tsewang Norbu's writings and actions regarding the structural tensions between the different institutional regimens at Katok will also make a contribution to studies of the development of monasticism in Tibet more broadly. This section has two parts: Tsewang Norbu's stated complaints against Katok and his suggestions for reform.

My primary source for this section is a collection of letters written by Tsewang Norbu and addressed to the seventh Dalai Lama, the king of Dege, Situ Penchen, and Zhamar Rinpoche. The letters were sent from Western Tibet and preserved in a manuscript edition of his *Collected Works* compiled and edited in Kyidrong (*skyid grong*).[185] As intimated earlier in this chapter, Tsewang Norbu tried to effect change at Katok by installing a new lama as the leader of Katok. These letters were written shortly after this was attempted and vigorously argue Tsewang Norbu's reasons for such an act. It is highly possible that because these letters were written shortly after the unsuccessful attempt at installing a new head lama at Katok that Tsewang Norbu intensified his rhetoric from his original formulations of the problems or his actual feelings on the matter. The letters are extremely corrupt and contain many spelling errors and occasional passages with scribal errors so bad that even my most learned informants could not decipher. I will supplements several long translated excerpts from Tsewang Norbu's letters with numerous citations of Situ Penchen's *Autobiography*. The latter work is extremely important for this study

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[185] This edition was the basis for the edition of his *Collected Works* in six volumes: *The Collected Works (gsuṅ 'bum) of Kaḥ-thog Rig-'dzin Chen-po Tshe-dbaṅ-nor-bu*. Dalhousie, H.P.: Damchoe Sangpo, 1976-1977

because it is the only autobiographical account by someone directly involved in carrying out Tsewang Norbu's plans for reform at Katok.

Criticisms of the Current State of Katok

Tsewang Norbu's most detailed statement of his vision of Katok's authentic traditions is articulated in a letter to the seventh Dalai Lama composed in 1752; again, *after* Tsewang Norbu attempted to impose new leadership on the monastery.[186] Tsewang Norbu and the Dalai Lama had been close for many years and were in regular contact during the early 1750s. At this time Tsewang Norbu was brokering several different peace deals in the Himalayas and thus regularly report ing his progress to the Dalai Lama and the Lhasa government. In the excerpts below Tsewang Norbu presents to the Dalai Lama his pessimistic historiography of Katok and his desire to see the original teachings and form of administration revived. In the first excerpt Tsewang Norbu talks about three interrelated issues for him: study of the Kama, monasticism, and meritocratic succession at Katok. The passage reads,[187]

> Previously at Katok the holders of the Teachings – which consisted solely of the Sūtra, Magical Net, and Mental Class – (were selected) analogously to the burning, cutting, and rubbing of gold. (This mode of

[186] Tsewang Norbu, *Collected Letters,* 761-764.

[187] Ibid., 762. lar kaH thog 'di sngar mdo dang sgyu 'phrul sems phyogs 'ba' zhig gi bstan pa 'dzin par bsreg bcad brdar ba'i gser bzhin dbon rabs dang gdung rab lta bu ma yin pa mdo dgongs pa 'dus pa dang/ sgyu 'phrul gsang ba snying po/ sems phyogs kun byed rgyal po ma bu rnams kyi rnam bshad 'bru non nges/ rang blos spel bar nes (read nus) pa'i klog dang/ bsam pa sdom gsum dag pas bla ma'i thugs zin gyi thog mar nye gnas mdzad cing/ sgom pa sems phyogs kyi nyams len mi gyo ba'i nyams la sogs pa ting nge 'dzin bzang po skyes pa la rgyal tshabs su rim par brgyud pa bla ma gdan rabs bcu gsum gyi bar de kho na ltar byung 'dug cing.

> succession) was unlike uncle-nephew and hereditary modes of succession. Throughout the abbacies of the thirteen lamas, who appeared in consecutive succession as regents, (the head lamas of the monastery gained their positions) solely in the following (threefold) way: 1) studying the definitive word commentaries of the expositions of the mother and son texts, i.e, the Sūtra That Gathers the Intentions, the root text of the Magical Net the Secret Nucleus, and the root text of the Mental Class the All-Creating King, 2) contemplation (which includes) serving as an attendant through becoming the lama's favorite because of pure observance of the three vows,[188] and 3) in terms of meditation, generating excellent contemplation, such as unwavering meditation experiences through cultivation of the Mental Class.

The translation of this passage may sound awkward, but the thrust of the argument is clear. Tsewang Norbu portrays an idealized original Katok tradition characterized by a meritocratic system of succession, exclusive adherence to the Kama, and monasticism (implied with the phrase pure observance of the three vows but confirmed elsewhere). In the Introduction to the study it was shown that Katok has always been home to a diverse set of teachings including Treasures and Sarma teachings such as the Mahāmūdra. Yet over the centuries many Katok lamas have

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[188] The Tibetan of this sentence is especially difficult to understand and perhaps corrupted. For instance, why does serving as an attendant (*nye gnas mdzad*) fall under the category of contemplation? An alternative reading sees studying (*klog pa*) and contemplation (*bsam pa*) as a pair and comprising part 2, and serving as attendant as part two. This is not likely because this passage seems to be structured around the triad of studying, contemplation, and meditation, thus the two should be kept separate.

held that the monastery's core tradition is the Kama. Here Tsewang Norbu is turning this convention of self-representation into a reactionary polemic. He is using the monastery's primary affiliation to the Kama to reject the changes implemented at Katok in recent times.

Many contemporary scholars agree that Tibetan Buddhism is animated by a creative tension between clerical and less institutional modalities. Tsewang Norbu seems to be operating out an analogous dichotomy. He sees an opposition between, on the one hand, rigorous academic study of canonical scriptures, celibate monasticism, and meritocratic rule, and on the other hand, and on the other hand, abandonment of the Kama, lax morality, and hereditary or reincarnation-based succession. The three elements of each pole seem to be mutually reinforcing, yet in my reading of the material Tsewang Norbu gives relative primacy to mode of succession. Tsewang Norbu believes Katok has degenerated from the first to the second modality. He is not arguing that the Kama is the only orthodox set of teachings in the Nyingma School overall, rather he is primarily concerned with preventing the monastery from becoming completely overtaken by hereditary lamas and trülkus. It is as if he thinks that this transformation has not been finalized and he can somehow scale it back.

In the passage above Tsewang Norbu also identifies a golden age when the original Katok tradition was fully operational at the monastery. He says the initial thirteen generations of lamas exclusively upheld this tradition. Tsewang Norbu then claims that the stretch of lamas who controlled Katok during the fifteenth and

sixteenth centuries – after the first thirteen lamas – maintained a regimen "comparable to" that of the monastery's founding fathers (*sgrig lam phyogs mthun*): "Subsequently, during the period spanning from Jñanakeru (i.e., Yeshé Gyeltsen, b. 1395) to Tsambunbor Tashi Gyatso the regimen was comparable (to that of the thirteen lamas)." [189] Yes hé Gyeltsen is associated with both Kama commentarial literature and Katok's Mahāmūdra lineages and his treatises on both subjects are still extant.[190] Trashi Gyatso (fl. sixteenth century) was an important author in the Katok line of instruction on the *Penetration of Samantabhadra's Intention* (*Gongpa Zangthel; dgongs pa zang thal*).[191] In Tsewang Norbu's periodization of Katok Yeshé Gyeltsen and Trashi Gyatso represent the first, but minor, stage in the decline of Katok. The lamas that followed them ruined Katok, according to Tsewang Norbu.

The next period of lamas at Katok – the Drungpa lamas – are blamed for causing a fundamental break with the earlier tradition. Tsewang Norbu writes,[192]

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[189] Ibid., p. 762; de rjes kyang dza+nyA na ke ru nas tsam bu 'bor bkra shis rgya mtsho'i bar de yi sgrig lam phyogs mthun.

[190] Yeshé Gyeltsen's works include his massive commentary on Dampa Deshek's *Outline of the* [*Nine*] *Vehicles* (*theg pa spyi bcings*) called the *Commentary on the Outline of the Vehicles*.

[191] Tashi Gyatso was a student of Horpo Shakya Gyeltsen, one of the greatest scholars of the Drung period. Both of them wrote commentaries on the *Penetration of Samantabhadra's Intention*: *rdzogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal gyi man ngag zab don mngon sum gsal byed* and *zab mo snying thig gi gnad thams cad bsdus pa'i don khrid lag len gsal ba*, respectively. These two works are found in Volume Five of the Thirteen Great Instructions of Katok (*kaH thog khrid chen bcu gsum*), ed. Gyurmé Tenpa Namgyel (*'gyur-med bstan pa rnam rgyal*; 1886-1952)).

[192] Tsewang Norbu, Collected Letters, 762; de rjes bla rabs kha shas kaH thog drung pa zhes dbon brgyud kyi bskyang zhing btsun tshugs ma shor tsam las thos bsam bsgom pa'i srol cung zad dman pas dgon pa'i lar rgya yang phyis gting sde dges bdag gir byas shing/ de mtshams gter ston klong gsal snying po la sde dge sangs rgyas bstan pas dgon pa tshang 'gril phul zhing drung pa'i chos gzhis gnyis su bsgos te phyed gter ston la phul/ phyed sde dge'i lo skor (read lo skya?) 'du ba'i thes su sbyar.

> After them several lamas in succession known as the Katok Drungpa administered (the monastery) with an uncle-nephew mode of succession. Apart from merely not losing altogether the established monastic discipline, the customs of hearing, contemplating, and meditating declined some. Eventually the monastery's cultural integrity (*lar rgya*) dissipated. Degé then commandeered (Katok). Afterward Degé king Sangyé Tenpa gave the entire monastery to treasure revealer Longsel Nyingpo and ordered the Drungpa estate (divided) in two. Half was given to Longsel Nyingpo and half was applied towards Degé's gathering of annual crops.

The first thing Tsewang Norbu says about the Drungpa is that their line was propagated through an indirect line of hereditary succession from uncle to nephew (*dbon brgyud*). The very next thing he says about the Drung lamas is that initially they barely maintained the study program, but eventually the monastery's cultural integrity was lost altogether. Thus by adopting a hereditary mode of succession the study and meditation suffered greatly and the kingdom eventually took possession of the monastery. Tsewang Norbu can be seen to suggest an implicit causality between abandonment of meritocracy and the ruination of the monastery.[193]

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[193] It is more likely that Degé took over the monastery because they wanted to break the Drungpa regime and its economic base in order to establish a new leadership at that would be cooperative with the kingdom.

In claiming that the Drung lamas presided over a complete break with the past Tsewang Norbu is able to avoid laying any of the blame at Longsel Nyingpo's feet. Tsewang Norbu was obligated to keep Longsel Nyingpo above the fray because he is part of the Longsel lineage by reincarnation status and because one of his main teachers was Longsel's son. To a contemporary western scholar it would seem that Longsel bears some responsibility for the changes that Tsewang Norbu decries, but here Tsewang Norbu blames the Drungpa lamas for degrading Katok to such a degree that Degé was compelled to take over the monastery. He seems to be implying that Longsel couldn't help but change Katok since he inherited a broken monastery. In fact, Tsewang Norbu is nearly silent on the period of Longsel's tenure at Katok. In his letters Tsewang Norbu makes many more individual complaints about the current state of Katok but the above suffice as the summation of his views on the matter.

Criticisms of Drimé Zhingkyong

The preceding section analyzed Tsewang Norbu's trenchant criticism of the degenerations in study, discipline, and succession that had befallen Katok. It was shown that Tsewang Norbu suggested that uncle-nephew lineages are opposed to the true Katok heritage. In his letters Tsewang Norbu proceeds from structural criticisms about the general problem of non-meritocratic modes of succession at Katok, as seen above, to then name a particular contemporaneous figure who is the embodiment of this new "problem" at Katok. Tsewang Norbu singles our Drimé Zhingkyong Gönpo

(*dri med zhing skyong mgon po*; 1724-1786), the reincarnation of Longsel's son Sönam Deutsen (d. 1723) as the chief culprit. Sönam Deutsen too is representative of the institutional changes at Katok. According to Tsewang Norbu's autobiographies Sönam Deutsen did not teach the Kama to Tsewang Norbu, nor was he a monk. He gained his status at Katok through hereditary succession, as his father was Longsel Nyingpo, and because he was also a reincarnate lama, said to be the reincarnation of Dündül Dorjé. This section covers Tsewang Norbu's zealous campaign against Zhingkyong because of his alleged ineffective leadership and because of what he represents as a product of the new regime at Katok.[194]

Sönam Deutsen was considered the "immediate reincarnation" (*de ma thag pa'i sprul sku*) of Dündül Dorjé, meaning he was born relatively soon after Dündül's death. I contend tha the notion of reincarnated lama used in this case was primarily nominal or ceremonial and did not involve Sönam Deutsen actually inheriting Dündül Dorjé's estate and becoming a key lineage holder of his teachings, as the role of "reincarnated lama" is usually understood. In fact great treasure revealers such as Dündul Dorjé do not usually spawn reincarnation lineages.[195] Moreover, in the late seventeenth century reincarnate lamas were still not very prominent in the Nyingma school overall. Only with the growth of large Nyingma monas teries in Degé, as

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[194] The Zhingkyong reincarnation line was the first powerful and on-going line of reincarnate lamas at Katok and is still the highest-ranked such line in twenty-first century Katok. Profiles of all the Zhingkyong lamas are found in Jamyang Gyeltsen, *Brief History of Katok,* 103-108. Chapter Three of this dissertation covers the growth of reincarnate lamas at Katok.

[195] It is my observation that most treasure revealers, regardless of fame, do not usually give rise to reincarnation lines upon their deaths. Rather, a given tertön's treasures are maintained by their blood relatives and prophesied "treasure He gained his statu), which limits the need to establish a reincarnation for the purpose of the propagation of the treasures or personal property.

chronicled in Chapter One, do we see the rise of Nyingma *institutional* reincarnated lamas who were meant to provide continuity of leadership for their monasteries and estates.

Institutional reincarnated lamas came to Katok with Sönam De utsen's reincarnation. Tsewang Norbu, for instance, was not such a reincarnate lama. He was the "reincarnation" of a minor figure who was a student of Longsel's. He was only invested at Katok because of his great abilities, not because his previous incarnation had a role at Katok monastery itself. Sönam Deutsen's trülku Zhingkyong, on the other hand, was supposed to step into his predecessor's shoes and rule the monastery. In the next chapter we will talk about Zhingkyong in a balanced way based on a variety of sources. In this chapter the concern is on on Tsewang Norbu's *portrayal* of Zhingkyong.

Tsewang Norbu began his attack on Zhingkyong by casting aspersion on his very status as the reincarnation of Sonam Deutsen. Tsewang Norbu claims that Drimé Zhingkyong's father forced Zhingkyong into this role even though he was not the real reincarnation of Sonam Deutsen. In a letter to the seventh Dalai Lama Tsewang Norbu attempts to expose the dishonest means by which Drimé Zhingkyong himself came to be known as the trülku of Sönam Deutsen. The letter reads,[196]

[196] Tsewang Norbu, Collected Letters, 787; bdag gi bla ma bsod nams lde'u btsan gyis sprul skur grags pa du ma byung ba las/ 'ba' phyogs kyi sngags rgyud zhig shes sgo gsal khul gyi kho rang dgon du phyin nas nged dang si tu'i tshad mar byas pa'i rdzun bad la brten sde dges kyang chu 'bab tu gzhag 'dug rung blo bab med gshis/ khong rang yang shas cher 'ba' phyogs su sdod yod 'dug lags.

> Many (children) reputed to be trülkus of my lama Sönam Deutsen emerged, including one born to a family of tantrists (*sngags rgyud*) from Batang (*'ba' phyogs*). (Drimé Zhingkyong's father) was clever so once he arrived at the monastery he gave the false impression that Situ and I had verified (his son as the trülku). Degé was not completely satisfied but just let it rest at that. He (the father) mainly lives in the Batang.

According to this account Zhingkyong's father lied to the authorities, telling them that Situ Penchen and Tsewang Norbu had recognized the boy to be the reincarnation of Sönam Deutsen. Zhingkyong's father comes off sounding like a cunning village priest who installed his son at a big monastery through brazen deception. Actually, Zhingkyong's father was not a minor lay tantrist but a respected treasure revealer from the Batang area. His name was Chöjé Lingpa (*chos rje gling pa;* 1682-1725/6) and forty-two of his treasures are collected in the Rinchen Terdzöd.[197] Knowing Zhingkyong's paternity we can better appreciate the ferocity of Tsewang Norbu's attack on Zhingkyong. In other letters Tsewang Norbu makes related claims about Zhingkyong not having a destiny with Katok. In a letter to the king of Dege he writes, "How can I settle on an appraisal of what Zhingkyong is

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[197] Jamyang Gyeltsen, *Brief History of Katok,* 104. For a brief profile in English of Chöjé Lingpa, see Bradburn, *Masters of the Nyingma Lineage*, 279-281.

really like? I have *heard* he is good. But there have always been signs that he would not be of much benefit to Katok" (emphasis added).[198]

Tsewang Norbu uses temple renovations as the main index by which to judge Drimé Zhingkyong's service to the monastery. At one point Tsewang Norbu grudgingly admits that Drimé Zhingkyong[199] did at least attempt to raise funds and repair the monastery. In his letter to the seventh Dalai Lama he mentions Drimé Zhingkyong and Trashi Puntsok's campaign to get permission to raise funds for the renovation of the monastery. Tsewang Norbu writes that Zhingkyong "was repeatedly insistent about the need for permission to repair Katok. Because of his concern he submitted to Degé (prince) Sönam Gönpo[200] a letter with an appeal for permission to renovate (Katok), like a child presenting to his parents the good and bad (of a situation)."[201]

Tsewang Norbu does not think that Drimé Zhingkyong was completely noble and selfless in raising money for the renovation of the monastery. Rather he uses the discussion of Zhingkyong's fundraising efforts to explicitly accuse Drimé

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[198] Tsewang Norbu, Collected Letters, 775; zhing skyong rang nyid ngo bo bzang ngan ci ltar yin ni bdag gi kha tshon ga la gcod bzang po yin nyan yod/ kaH thog gi bstan pa la ni phan pa cher mi 'byung ba'i ltas sngar nas kyang shar

[199] Working in concert with Tashi Puntsok, Sönam Deutsen's nephew.

[200] Sönam Gönpo was the first son of Tenpa Tsering (*bstan pa tshe ring*), the greatest of Degé's kings and publisher of the Degé Kangyur.

[201] Ibid., 762; kaH thog gi zhig gso sgrub chog pa dgos tshul snga phyir nan bskyed dang/ 'di ras kyang do gal byas 'dug par zhig gso byas chog tshul gyi 'phros kyang sde dge bsod nams mgon po la btang ba'i ze reg (read reg zig) kyang bu tshas pha mar legs nyes gsol ltar gzigs lam du phebs pa.

Zhingkyong of misappropriating the money solicited for the monastery. In a particularly libelous passage in a letter to the king Degé, Tsewang Norbu says,[202]

> For many years Zhingkyong's wandered around advertising (*bsnyed pa*) the renovations at Katok, summoned as if (tied) by a rope and roaming around like water (*thag ltar du sbran chu ltar du nyul*).[203] He collected a lot and then deposited it at Katok. (Claiming) the Rindzin Chenpo [i.e. Tsewang Norbu] didn't order a renovation, he shamelessly directed the money towards his family's calls for support (*gso sbran*) and did not care at all about protecting the temple from thi eves. If because he didn't prioritize (the renovation; *skabs su mi che bas*) the faithful no longer regarded the temple and do not contribute towards the renovation, that would be an inexhaustible sin and downfall. This year we have to decisively aggregate all of Zhingkyong's (remaining) assets (and reclaim them for the monastery).

Two major accusations are made in this passage. The first accusation is that Drimé Zhingkyong falsely claimed Tsewang Norbu did not order the renovations. Tsewang Norbu wants his reader – the king of Degé – to assume the worst and think

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[202] Tsewang Norbu, Collected Letters, 771; de yang zhing skyong rang nas lo mang po'i snga rol nas kaH thog gi zhig gso la bsnyad pa'i rgyal khams thag ltar du sbran chu ltar du nyul rnyad dgu bsdus te gzhag kaH thog gi zhig gso rig 'dzin chen po'i bkas ma gnang zhes dkor rdzas bag med khyim gyi gso sbran la gtang zhing gtsug lag khang gi rkun bsrung gi do gal tsam yang mi byed pa skabs su mi che bas des na dad can gyi gtsug lag la mi dmigs te phul ba'i dkor gtsug lag khang gi zhig gsor ma gtang na sdig ltung mi zad pa'i rgyur che bas de tshe 'di lo zhing skyong can nas kyang ci yod nges par spung dgos dang.

[203] I thank Khenpo Ngawang Dorje of the Tashi Choeling Dharma Center in Charlottesville for help understanding this idiom. He says that the first simile connotes repeated visit.

that Drimé Zhingkyong made up the preposterous claim that Tsewang Norbu did not want Katok to be repaired. The second and more serious allegation is that Drime Zhingkyong embezzled donations to Katok for the all-important renovations. The practice by lamas of supporting their extended families with monastic funds was not unheard of, but it was considered a serious wrongdoing that resulted in defilement (*dkor sgrib*). In the following section we will look at Tsewang Norbu's claims about the the state of disrepair of two temples at Katok which is blamed on Zhingkyong.

Katok in Disrepair

Over the course of Tsewang Norbu's letters, he mentions several different temples at Katok that needed repairs and gives scornful accounts of the problems caused by Zhingkyong's alleged neglect. Although it must be assumed that Tsewang Norbu's accounts of the disrepair at Katok are exaggerated to some degree (and second-hand), they offer important lessons in Tsewang Norbu's thinking about the authentic Katok tradition. Furthermore the accounts of the temples in these letters shed a light on some of the temples that were important at Katok in the eighteenth century and earlier. Tsewang Norbu complains primarily about the sorry state of two temples at Katok: Nyingön (*nyin dgon*) and Kumbum Ringmo (*sku 'bum ring mo*).

Nyingön Temple

In two different letters to the king of Degé Tsewang Norbu makes an impassioned plea for the renovation of Nyingön, which is also known by the

homophone Nyinggön (*rnying dgon*) or "Old Monastery."[204] In one letter to the King of Degé Tsewang Norbu says, "The earlier holy patriarchs praised it [Nyingon] as the abode of the endless knot of Katok's heart,"[205] meaning it is the location of its geomantic heart *cakra*. In another letter to the same recipient he expands upon the nature of the site and its history:[206]

> "In earlier times Dampa Déshek understood that Katok Nyinggön was the abode (of the monastery's) heart, and said that if a meditation community was established there Katok's teachings would be widely promulgated (*ches dar*). Mahāsiddha Thangtong Gyelpo also praised it as such. During Buborwa Trashi Gyatso's time there were scattered meditation monks (*bsgom gra*; at Nyinggön/Nyingön). Subsequently, (as foretold) by Rindzin Gargyi Wangchuk in a prophecy, Vajraheru laid the foundation for his ecclesiastical household (*bla brang*) and after that my forefather- and uncle-lamas gradually went there and properly established a retreat center.

The first line of this excerpt establishes that the Nyingön, or Nyinggön, area is a spiritually charged place and that the founder of Katok Dampa Deshek intended for

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[204] Tsewang Norbu alternates between these two spellings, as do other authors.

[205] Ibid., 770.

[206] Tsewang Norbu, Collected Letters, 775; kaH thog dgon rnying de sngar dam pa bde gshegs nyid kyi yang thugs kyi gnas su dgongs nas 'dir sgrub sde tshugs na kaH thog gi bstan pa ches dar zhes gsung zhing/ grub chen thang stong rgyal po'i yang de ltar bsngags shing/ bu 'bor ba bkra shis rgya mtsho'i skabs su bsgom gra tho re ba yod/ de rjes rig 'dzin gar gi dbang phyug gi lung gi gtsang chen badz+ra he rus bla brang gi rmang gting de rjes rang re'i yab mes sam khu bo bla ma rim can du byon nas bsgrub pa'i sde yang dag 'dzugs par mdzad pa.

it to become a thriving place of meditation. Dampa Deshek's biography recounts that many winters he taught tantric meditations and yogas on the sunny side of the Katok valley (*nyin ri*), the same side as Nyinggon's location. Tsewang Norbu says above that at some point a meditation center was constructed. The Nyingön retreat center and temple were in existence by the first half of the seventeenth century because Longsel Nyingpo studied under the "Nyingön lama" Sangye Tashi (*sangs rgyas bkra shis*) during his first stay at Katok in the 1740s.[207]

In a letter to the king of Dege Tsewang Norbu makes specific claims about problems with the Nyingön temple. He emphatically states that under Zhingkyong "the old temple was not restored even a little."[208] He states that the old stones and rammed earth, the contorted beams and pillars, and faulty drainage all need attention.[209] Tsewang Norbu then takes his argument further and asserts that the royal court of Dege should be concerned because the degredation at Katok has ramifications for the peace and prosperity of the entire kingdom. He writes,[210]

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[207] Sangyé Tashi's reincarnation was found, thus starting the Nyingön trülku incarnation line. The first incarnation was recognized by Zhingkyong, thus he must have been born several decades after his predecessor died.

[208] Ibid., p. 771; gtsug lag khang rnying pa la bcos bsgyur cung zad yang ma song.

[209] Ibid.; zhing sa rdo rnying pa bor zag mi gtang bar mi byd dka' med kyi ka gdung yo 'khyams bsrang ba thig tshag byed dgos. I did not translate this passage because I do not completely understand it.

[210] Ibid., 770-771; kaH thog nyin dgon 'di sngar rang re'i pha mes rngu yi bla mas btab pa kaH thog rang gi thugs dpe'i gnas su dam pa gong ma rnams kyi bsngags kyang/ dus phyis zhing gcod [correct to dbon] zung gi blo bde zhi med du byas 'dug pa rten 'brel spyi dang bye brag kaH thog gi yul bdag dang sbyin bdag gi gtso bo sde dge rgyal po rang nyid yin na de yi rten 'brel la yang gnod tshab che ba zhig byung bar shes la.

> Katok Nyingon was founded in earlier times by my ancestors the Ngu (*rngu*) lamas.[211] Even though it was praised by Dampa (Deshek and the other) patriarchs as the abode of the endless knot of Katok's heart, in later times Zhing(kyong) and Nephew (Trashi Püntsok) tormented (everybody connected with the temple; *blo bde zhi med du byas pa*). It was known that the general auspiciousness, and especially that of Katok's chief landlord and patron, the king of Degé, was greatly harmed and disturbed.

In short, Tsewang Norbu tells the king of Dege that Nyingon is a place of great spiritual significance and that the auspiciousness of the Dege kingdom is influenced to some degree by the state of the temple. Next we turn to Tsewang Norbu's account of another important Katok temple that is in poor condition due to Zhingkyong's alleged negligence.

The Kumbum Ringmo Stūpa Complex

The problems with the Kumbum Ringmo temple were even more grave.[212] Kumbum Ringmo is a long and narrow rectangular building below Katok's main temple and the Nyingön containing large reliquary stūpas that contain the relics of Katok's founding lamas. As discussed in the Introduction, Mani Rinchen built the

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[211] Khenpo Ngawang Dorje says that the word *rngu* must be a family name, though I don't understand how this relates to Tsewang Norbu's family. The biographical materials do not state that this is the name of his family or clan.

[212] In fact we learn from the autobiography of a later lama – Getsé Penchen – that it was not completely renovated until 1778s. Cf. Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Autobiography*, 184.

Kumbum Ringmo upon his return from his studies with the treasure revealer Guru Chöwang in the thirteenth century. As with the Nyingön, Tsewang Norbu blames Zhingkyong's corruption for all the problems.

In a few letters, Tsewang Norbu warns of safeguarding the deteriorating temples against theft. Apparently in old Tibet thieves would prey on monasteries and steal their icons and relics. In one letter, though, Tsewang Norbu ratchets up the claims against Zhingkyong and explicitly blames his poor leadership for the loss of important relics to theft. He writes to the king of Degé that Zhingkyong,[213]

> has not provided any desperately needed service at all to the Katok main hall. But not only that, since Dampa Deshek's time and through all of the generations of lamas – for almost 700 years – only minor deteriorations have occurred to the main hall. Unprecedented deteriorations have occurred since he (Drimé Zhingkyong) has occupied the monastic seat. From the past until now the lifting (*blang*) of the heart contents (*thugs nang rdzong*) of the supremely blazing, lustrous blessings of the reliquary stupas of the successive lamas and patriarchs that is renowned as Kumbum Ringmo was unheard of. (But) these days since (Drimé Zhingkyong) has not been concerned with

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[213] Ibid., 775; dgos nges kaH thog gi gtsug lag khang la zhabs tog cung zad yang ma byung bar ma zad dam pa bde gshegs nas sngar bla rabs ji snyed mi lo bdun brgyar nye ba'i ring gtsug lag khang la zhig ral phran bu las ma byung na kho pa gdan sar bsdad nas zhig ral sngar mi grags yong ba 'di lta dang. de bzhin bla rabs gong ma rim can gyi sku gdung mchod rten sku 'bum ring mor grags pa byin brlabs kyi gzi 'od mchog tu 'bar ba de rnams sngar nas da ltar thugs nang rdzong blang ba ma thos na deng dus bkur sti zhabs tog med pa'i khur rkun bsrung gi do dal tsam yang ma byas nas mtshams med spyod pa la dga' ba'i rkun ma rnams kyi nang rdzong blang… ya re cha.

> safeguarding (the stupas) from robbers who are disrespectful and rude, thieves who love engaging in the sins of immediate retribution have taken the contents… How incredible!"

Their desecration of the Kumbum stūpas would certainly be perceived as a major violation that could result in the loss of auspiciousness and blessing of Katok. To blame Zhingkyong for this is an incendiary claim and certainly bolsters Tsewang Norbu's case for Zhingkyong's overthrow.

Not only did Zhingkyong's "criminal negligence" and corruption make Katok vulnerable to thieves who burglarize the Kumbum Ringmo and desacralise the holy reliquary stupas, Tsewang Norbu claims that he also left Katok open to being taken over by usurpers. In several letters he warns in strident tones that Katok is very close to completely losing the last vestiges of its Kama and monastic heritage. This is another major point in Tsewang Norbu's dossier against Zhingkyong that he is sharing with the seventh Dalai Lama and the king of Degé. For instance, in a letter to the Seventh Dalai Lama quoted earlier, Tsewang Norbu writes,[214]

> At present, because of the ravages of time, I fear that if Katok is left in its present state (*rang bzhin de gar*) its traditions will be adulterated with the dharma lineages of hypocrites who deceive sentient beings of the degenerate age, meditation frauds, treasure frauds, heretical treasure revealers, those who have been overwhelmed by demons, and

[214] Ibid., 774; da ni dus kyi dbang gi kaH thog 'di rang bzhin de gar gzhag na snyigs dus 'gro ba bslu byed kyi zog po grub rdzun gter rdzun gter log 'dres khyer dam nyams kyi chos rgyud dang 'dres nas nges don snying po'i bstan pa la tshab chen gyi gnod par dogs nas.

those with broken tantric pledges. Thereby the teachings of the essence of the definitive meaning will be greatly harmed.

The Zhamar Incident

The preceding litany of offenses by Zhingkyong and their terrible repercussions are meant to elicit outrage and a desire to change the leadership at Katok among his audience, i.e., the seventh Dalai Lama and the king of Dege. Tsewang Norbu also had a plan to install another lama at Katok to revive the older traditions. It is not totally clear whether Tsewang Norbu intended for his selection to usurp Zhingkyong's authority outright or whether they would share power in some way. Either way the plan was quite bold and Tsewang Norbu actually tried to get a lama of his choosing installed at Katok in 1752. This section examines the way Tsewang Norbu described his soution to the "Zhingkyong problem," looks at the lama he wanted to takeover Katok, and considers why the plan failed. This event had the potential to have been as tramautic an event at Katok as Longsel's arrival.

Tsewang Norbu's strategy for changing the situation at Katok had as its centerpiece the installation of the young Zhamar as the new head lama of Katok. In the same letters studied above he discusses this plan and its aftermath with the seventh Dalai Lama, the king of Degé, and Situ Penchen. In the letters Tsewang Norbu argues that 1) he himself is not suitable for the position of head lama, 2) Zhamar enjoys sufficient moral authority to be accepted at Katok, and 3) there is no sectarian incompatibility between Karma Kagyü and Nyingma, and thus no

incompatibility between Zhamar and Katok traditions. What Tsewang Norbu does not explicitly say – but is tacit to his promotion of Zhamar – is that the young Karma Kagyü trülku will restore the original and "pure" Katok traditions.

Under the surface is a bigger issue at stake. From one perspective the attacks against Zhingkyong are not primarily about his negligence but about what he represents. Tsewang Norbu claims that Zhingkyong is part of a new and unfortunate epoch at Katok that has broken with the intentions of monastery's founders. In the past the monastery was run through a system of meritocracy and now bogus trülku's with no learning are gaining their positions of power at Katok through deception. This is a battle between modes of succession. Thus the problem lies with the hereditary and trülku systems themselves, and Zhingkyong is just the representative of them. Tsewang Norbu tries to give the impression to his readers that Zhamar can eliminate the problem elements at Katok and usher in a new era of monk scholars at Katok. Below we will look at his claims and then consider an account of the "incident" given in Situ Penchen's *Autobiography*.

The Right Man for the Job?

Tsewang Norbu's patrons must have wondered why Tsewang Norbu did not simply return from western Tibet and the Himalayas to personally fix the problems at Katok. He is cognizant of this conundrum and addresses it in the letters. His response is predicated on his irrevocable commitment to the wanderer lifestyle and a claim that he does not enjoy enough support at Katok to implement his policies by himself.

The following excerpt is typical of his self-representation as a wanderer and its ramifications for his inclination to return to Katok. He says in a letter to the seventh Dalai Lama, "My lama Sönam Deutsen insisted that I occupy the throne at Katok. But owing to karma I was fixated solely on the wandering lifestyle. Thus I didn't get even a little bit of time to stay at Katok."[215] I believe that Tsewang Norbu was also uneasy about returning to the kingdom of Degé. Powerful Tibetan kings sometimes exercised a lot of control – including travel restrictions – over local lamas and this would have been tremendously unapplealing to Tsewang Norbu. Tsewang Norbu knew about Situ Penchen's obligations to the Degé royal court – which included frequent visits to the palace, requests for divinations, and rituals – and it may be surmised that he did not want to be bound by similar ties.

Later on in the same letter Tsewang Norbu employs false modesty to further deflect demands that he take care of Katok himself. He says he does not have the clout at Katok to push through his desired reforms to the monastery. He writes,[216]

> At this time when the Precious Jewels and dharma protectors endowed with the wisdom eye have forsaken it (the monastery), I have thought about how someone like me – who is a renunciant that spends time in places far from Katok, is of slight importance and power, and whose

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[215] Ibid., 763; bdag gi bla ma bsod nams lde'u btsan te/ des bdag kaH thog gi khri la sdod par nan gyi gnang yang las kyi dbang gi rgyal khams kho nar blo rtse gtad pa yi kaH thog cha shas tsam yang sdod rgyu ma byung.

[216] Ibid.; 'di la dkon mchog chos bsrung ye shes spyan ldan rnams kyi ma dgongs tshe bdag lta kaH thog nas sa yul ring po'i gnas su bskal [read bskyal] pa'i bya bral 'khos stobs phra mor gnas pa nam 'chi cha med zhig gi brlabs chen rgyal bstan gyi bya ba ji ltar bgyid snyams nas rang las yin kyang yus [read yul] dkon mchog la 'tshong [read tshangs] dgos.

> time of death uncertain – could do the work of the blessed teachings of the Conqueror? If I tried I would necessarily mishandle (the task).

Had he wanted to, earlier in his life Tsewang Norbu certainly could have accrued to himself much power and influence over Katok. After nearly three decades away it is likely that his stature at the monastery had waned some. Unfortunately the responses from the seventh Dalai Lama and the king of Degé are not preserved in Tsewang Norbu's *Collected Writings* thus we do not know how they reacted to any of his claims, least of all his insistence that he was not suited to fix Katok himself and in person.

The Unsuccessful Enthronement of Zhamar at Katok

Who did Tsewang Norbu think was best suited to reform Katok, and why? Tsewang Norbu promoted only one candidate to take over Katok, the young Zhamar. Earlier in the chapter it was reported that the young but influential eighth Zhamar Pelchen Chökyi Döndrup (*dpal chen chos kyi don grub*; 1695-1732) perished while *en route* to China, as did his traveling partner the twelfth Karmapa. The tenth Zhamar Chödrup Gyatso (*chos grub rgya mtsho*; 1741-1792) was about twelve years old and living at nearby Pelpung Monastery with Situ Penchen when Tsewang Norbu nominated him to take over Katok. Every letter that Tsewang Norbu sent to his patrons about Zhingkyong's disastrous reign concludes with an equally forceful call for the installation of Zhamar on the throne of Katok (*kaH thog gi khrir mnga' gsol*

ba). Tsewang Norbu's selection of the Zhamar was not arbitrary and therefore this section begins with a short account of the close relations between the two lamas, and then proceeds to present Tsewang Norbu's arguments for the Zhamar to take over Katok and concludes with an examination of a first person account of the actual enthronement of Zhamar at Katok made by Situ Penchen.

The tenth Zhamar Chödrup Gyatso (*chos grub rgya mtsho*) was born in 1742 into the prestigious Tashitsé (*bkra shis rtse*) estate in Tsang. His older brother was the third Penchen Lama Pelden Yeshé (*dpal ldan ye shes;* 1738-1780). After the premature (suspiciously so?) death of the previous Zhamar, whose recognition was contested by an aristocratic family in southern Tibet with their own candidate, Tsewang Norbu and Situ Penchen became more proactive in the recognition process of the next Zhamar. Situ Penchen notes in his *Autobiography* that he made his selection in the eight lunar month of 1743 from Pelpung Monastery, and immediately notified Tsewang Norbu and other high-ranking Karma Kagyü lamas. The very next year Situ began preparing for the enthronement, and sends more letters about the Zhamar selection to high Kagyü lamas in central Tibet and the king of Tibet, Pholhané Sönam Topgyel (*pho lha nas bsod nams stobs rgyal*; 1689-1747). In 1745 Situ asked the king of Degé for permission to go to central Tibet to take care of the trülku selection process, which involved gaining broader support for his candidate and negotiating with the parents, who were noblemen aligned with the Geluk sect.

Based at the Karmapa headquarters of Tsurpu Monastery (*mtshur phu dgon*), Situ Penchen began over a year of negotiations with Zhamar's family.[217] Situ recounts a dream he had at the outset of the negotiations that is obviously symbolic of the fact that there were many barriers to finally gaining custody of the young Zhamar. In his sleep he saw a life-size statue of a Buddha and a statue of Milarepa encased in a crystal, and stuck inside a snake. Anti-Kagyü sectarianism seems to have played a role in the resistance shown by the Tashitsé estate and Tashi Lhunpo monastery in giving up this boy to assume the role of a Kagyü trülku. Less than a century before, the fifth Dalai Lama defeated the Tsangpa Desí (*gtsang pa sde srid*), ruler of this area, and chased the Desí's Karma Kagyü chaplains around Tibet. Thus when Situ went to Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in the summer of 1747 to finalize the arrangements he made the lamas promise to respect the Kagyü teachings. In 1749 Situ went to Lhasa to meet the new king, Pholhané Gyurmé Namgyel (whose father died the previous year) and ask his permission to return to Degé. Situ reports that the king told him that it would be better if the Zhamar went with him to Kham. Why would the Zhamar need to go all the way to Degé, far away from his monastery, family and the Karmapa? One answer to this question is that there was a perception on the part of some Karma Kagyü and Lhasa elite that the Zhamar had adversaries in central Tibet who might try to harm him or his office, as may have happened to the ninth Zhamar who died while still a child.

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[217] For a history of Tsurpu Monastery see Rinchen Pelzang's *Inventory of Tsurpu Monastery* (mtshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag kun gsal me long).

In the summer of 1749 Situ Penchen and the Zhamar departed for Degé. They received a royal welcome upon arrival at the capital and then made visits to several different regional monasteries and palaces. The Zhamar settled in at Pelpung while Situ resumed his busy life as court chaplain. For several years Zhamar kept a low profile at Pelpung, participating in seasonal festivals at the Degé court and traveling infrequently.

Tsewang Norbu does not say that Zhamar himself could solve Katok's management and curricular and liturgical problems. He does not even offer a detailed plan for how Zhamar's presence at Katok would effect change there. What is said repeatedly is simply that Zhamar would "preserve the marks" (*mtshan skyong*) of Katok's authentic traditions. "Preserve the marks" is not a common locution in Tibetan literature and is not found in any dictionary nor found on the Web. I understand it to be an understated way of saying enact or do. In this way it is similar to *tshul bstan pa* (to give the appearance of doing something), as in the 'the Blessed One gave the appearance of passing into Nirvana' (*bcom ldan 'das myang ngan las 'das pa'i tshul bstan pa*). The Tibetan word *mtshan* in the phrase *mtshan skyong* denotes a sign or characteristic and here means the appearances of traditional acts and values, such as study of the Kama or monasticism. The second word, *skyong*, means both the defensive act of protection and the offensive sense of sustain and nurture. Here Tsewang Norbu intends the Zhamar to do both; preserve Katok's tradition from completely disappearing and nurture it so that it can make a revival.

As the Zhamar was still relatively young and not yet a proven leader, in his promotion of Zhamar Tsewang Norbu plays up the sanctity and durability of Zhamar's incarnation lineage. Tsewang Norbu recounts to the Dalai Lama, "When I heard that in the scriptures of many tertön of yore there are prophesies by Orgyen Pema saying that Zhamar trülku's line of rebirths would span twenty -one (incarnations), I implored him to simply preserve the marks of sitting on the abbatial throne (*khri bzung ba'i mtshan skyong*)."[218] Futhermore Zhamar is said to be suitable for Katok because he can garner the respect and allegiance of the people. In the same letter Tsewang Norbu writes,[219]

> With respect to the common unbiased wishes of Katok's monks and patrons, because people follow after fame, therefore certainly everybody will respect a figure like Zhamar Choktrül…. Thus henceforth I think it would be good if after selecting (*bsngags*) Zhamar to preserve the m arks of (Katok's) cultural integrity, the concrete responsibility for the monastery should be continuously (*chu 'bab nyid du*) placed with him. Shouldn't it?

Tsewang Norbu's strategy to import a Karma Kagyü trülku to Katok to reinstate a meritocratic system of Kama studies and monasticism raises questions

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[218] Ibid.; zhwa dmar sprul sku'i sku phreng nyi shu rtsa gcig bar 'byung zhes o rgyan pad+ma sngon gyi gter ston snying pa mang po'i lung du yod par thos na de tshe khong la khri bzung ba'i lar rgya skyong tsam zhig mdzas par gsol nas.

[219] Ibid.; kaH thog gi grwa spyi sbyin bdag ris su ma chad pa'i 'dod mthun du skye bo rnams grags rjes 'brang ba shas che gshis zhwa dmar mchog sprul lta bu la thams cad mos par nges yang… da cha lar rgya'i mtshan skyong zhwa dmar ba la bsngags nas dgon pa'i khur les dngos gzhi chu 'bab nyid du gzhag na snyam pas de ltar legs sam.

about sectarian compatibility. Tsewang Norbu goes to great lengths in his letters to state that 1) Katok will not be converted to the Kagyü sect and 2) the true Katok lineage is in fact closely wedded to the Karma Kagyü. In a letter to the Dalai Lama Tsewang Norbu emphatically states that Katok will not lose its Nyingma sectarian affiliation and become a Kagyü monastery. "It is impossible that Katok's Nyingma sectarian tradition will be converted to the Kar(ma Kagyü) tradition" (*kaH thog rnying ma'i chos lugs kar lugs su ga la bsgyur*).[220]

The idea that the Katok lineage is intimately bound up with Karma Kagyü figures is historically accurate. In the below excerpt Tsewang Norbu provides a long litany of names of Karma Kagyu lamas that have had relations with Katok lamas over the centuries. Tsewang Norbu argues from this that the Zhamar's arrival at Katok is simply the continuation of a tradition that dates back to the earliest generations at Katok. Addressed to the king of Degé, he writes,[221]

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[220] Ibid., 774. As the Zhamar could not be successfully installed on the throne I assume that Tsewang Norbu was not able to effectively convey this point to the lamas and monks at Katok.

[221] Ibid., 773; kaH dam pa bde gshegs pa de dus dus gsum sangs rgyas kyi sprul par zhal gyi gzhes shing khyad par ma 'ongs bskal pa skar ma bkram pa lta bur rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas tshe dpag med du sangs rgya bar mi 'jig bden pa'i tshig gi gsung ba sa bcu'i mgon po nyid du grub pa de ni dpal phag mo grub pa dang ma spun ngo thog yin/ …gzhan yang ma gcig zha ma sogs gsar rnying ris su ma chad pa'i bla ma mang du brten/ lam 'bras sogs man ngag gi bka' lung dang/ bde mchog dges rdor/ gdan gzhi sogs gsang sngags gsar ma'i rgyud la yang gsan pa shin tu che/ phag mo grub pa dang phar slob tshur slob mdzad/ kar+ma dus gsum mkhyen pa'i tshes bcu'i tshogs mchod byin brlabs kyi dpa' bo mkha' 'gro tshim tshul la dgyes pas dbang bskur gsan te rjes sngar mched grogs pis slob ma gshegs pa'i 'og tu kaH thog gi gdan sar rgyal tshabs su gyur pa gtsang ston 'gro ba'i mgon po dang/ 'gro mgon sangs rgyas ras chen thugs yid gcig tu 'dres te 'gro mgon ras chen gyi/ gtsang ston la rdzogs chen gyi chos kyang mang du gsan pa grags che/ gtsang ston gyi gdan sa ba byams 'bum dang rgyal sras spot brag pa dag thugs yid gcig 'dres yin/ dial kar+ma pak+shi'i kyang bsnyen rdzogs zhu sa spyan snga byams pa 'bum la mdzad mdo rgyud sems kyi chos kyang mang du gsan/ rje mi bskyod zhabs kyi dus mkhyen nas kar+ma pak+shi'i bar don brgyud kyi chu bo dam gtsang byams gsum 'dren 'os zhes gsung tsher lung drung pa kun dga' rnam rgyal gyi kaM tshang bsnyan brgyud chos 'byung du bris snang kaH thog nam mkha' rdo rjes akr+ma pa rol pa'i rdo rje la rdzogs chen mkha' 'gro snying thig gi khrid zhus de yi brgyud pa ni las 'bral rtsal nas rgyal sras legs ldan rang byung rdo rje sngags 'chang g.yung ston/ des rol pa'i rdo rje yin/ de'i dbang lung gi rgyu yang ma

Dampa Déwarshekpa – who was accepted as an emanation of the buddhas of the three times, in particular is claimed by indestructible words of truth to (be destined to) attain enlightenment as the perfect buddha Amit āyus in the future eon Like Scattered Stars, and who became a protector (dwelling) on the tenth ground – was an actual maternal cousin of glorious Pakmodrüpa. …Furthermore he also relied on many lamas who did not differentiate between the New and Old schools, such as Machik Zhama.[222] (Dampa Deshek) also studied a great number of New School oral traditions of practice instruction, such as the Lamdré, and New School tantras, including Sa ṁvara, Hevajra, and Catuhpitha. He exchanged teachings with Pakmodrüpa. He rejoiced at the way the heroes and ḍākinīs were satisfied by the blessings of one of Karmapa Düsum Khyenpa's Tenth Day feast offerings, and then took initiations (from the Karmapa). Thus Dampa was first a spiritual peer (of the Karmapa's) and later his disciple. After (Dampa) passed away the protector of transmigrators Tsangtön (Dorjé Gyeltsen) became the regent of Katok. He and (the Karma Kagyü

chad par grags che zhing kho bos kyang khum/ des na kaH thog kaM tshang gdod nas bstan rgyun gcig tu gnas pa nas sngar ye nas ma 'dres pa zhig nges kyi blo bzos gsar du bsres pa min.

[222] *ma gcig zha ma* (1062-1149). Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 150, says, "[Zhama-lotsāwa's] sister, Zhama Machik, became a notable figure in the history of the Lamdré and was representative of the position that Tibetan women sometimes could hold, in contrast to the greater difficulties experienced by Indian women." See also Ibid., 291-293, 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba Gźon-nu-dpal and Roerich, *The Blue Annals,* 220-226 and Lo Bue, "A case of mistaken identity: Ma-gcig Labs-sgron and Ma-gcig Zha-ma."

lama) Drogön Sangyé Réchen's[223] minds mixed as one. It is well known that Drogön Réchen studied Great Perfection under Tsangtön. Tsangtön's acting resident in chief (*gdan sa pa*) Jampabum and Gyelsé Pomdrakpa (another Karma Kagyü lama)[224] became of one mind. The glorious Karma Pakshi [225] received full ordination from Chennga Jampabum. Tserlung Drungpa Kunga Namgyel[226] wrote in his History of the Karma Kamtsang Aural Lineage (*kaM tshang snyan brgyud chos 'byung*) that Lord Mikyö Shap[227] declared that between Düsum Kyenpa and Karma Pakshi the river of the transmission of the ultimate meaning (*don brgyud*) did pass through Dam(pa), Ts ang(tön), and Jampa('bum). Katok Namkha Dorjé[228] bestowed the instruction for the Dzokchen Khandro Nyingthik on Karmapa Rolpé Dorjé.[229] The lineage

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[223] 'gro mgön sangs rgyas ras chen (1148-1218); He was a student of the Karmapa Düsum Khyenpa.

[224] The third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé (*rang byung rdo rje*; 1284-1339) composed a short biography of Pomdrakpa (*spom brag pa*); 'gro mgon ras pa chen po dang rin po che spom brag pa'i rnam thar, 244.5-255.4.

[225] *kar+ma pak+Shi* (1204-1283), the second Karmapa. For more on his life and thought see Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, 97-106.

[226] *tsher lun drung pa kun dga' rnam rgyal* (b. 16th century). I do not know if this work is extant.

[227] *mi bskyod rdo rje* (1507-1554), the eight Karmapa

[228] nam mkha' rdo rje and his student Meshö Sangyé Dorjé (*rme shod sangs rgyas rdo rje;* 15th century) composed one or more manuals on the *Innermost Spirituality of the Ḍākinīs* (Khandro Nyingthik; *mkha' 'gro snying thig*). Unfortunately they are no longer extant. See Jamyang Gyeltsen, *A Brief History of Katok*, 56-58.

[229] *rol pa'i rdo rje* (1340-1383), The fourth Karmapa

> for those (instructions were transmitted) from Lendreltsel [230] to Gyalsé Lekde [231] to Rangjung Dorjé [232] to Ngakchang Yun gtön,[233] and from him (Namka Dorjé) to Rolpé Dorjé. It is well known that the initiation and reading transmission for this are unbroken. I too have received them. Therefore the Katok and Kamtsang teachings lines have abided as one since the earliest days. It is not the case that these two were not originally mixed and that I have newly blended them in an artificial way. [234]

Tsewang Norbu also wrote directly to the young Karma Kagyü heirarch to give Zhamar confidence about the viability of his attempt to take an active role at Katok. The letter states,[235]

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[230] pad+ma las 'brel rtsal (b. 1248) was the treasure discover of the Innermost Spirituality of the Dākinīs cycle. For more see Ibid., 47-50.

[231] rgyal sras legs ldan sho rgyal sras legs pa (b. 13th cent.) was a student of the Tertön Lendreltsel.

[232] *rang byung rdo rje* (1284-1339), The third Karmapa

[233] sngags 'chang g.yung ston (1284-1365).

[234] At different periods in its history Katok has had close relations with other Kagyü sects and subsects as well. For instance, Katok's relations with the Martsang (*smar tshang*) Kagyü sect were very important. At a certain point Katok's Mahāmudrā teachings became mixed with those of the Martsang Kagyü and this tradition was enshrined in Yeshé Gyeltsen's *Ocean of Mahāmudrā Oral Instructions* (*phyag chen man ngag rgya mtsho*). For more on the little-known school see the *Compilation of Biographies of the Lamas of the Martsang Kagyü.* It contains multiple references to relations between its lamas and those of Katok Monastery.

[235] Tsewang Norbu, Collected Letters, 767; snga 'gyur gyi ring lugs kaH thog gi lta grub dang dpal kar+ma kaM tshang pa chen po'i ring lugs gnas na dbyer med du grub bzhin slad nas kyang kaH thog gi seng ge'i khrir gdan chags shing 'od gsal rdo rje snying po'i ston pa dang/ snying po phyir mi ldog pa 'khor lo'i gtam/ gnyug ma rlung sems dbyer med gdams pa rnams gcig tu bskyang nas mtha' yas pa'i sems can rnams nyer 'tshor rgyal bstan ji srid kyi bar du gnas pa snying nas gsol ba 'debs pa.

> As it is established that the Katok view and practice of the Nyingma tradition and the tradition of the glorious and great Karma Kamtsang are indivisible, hereafter I sincerely supplicate you to establish your seat (*gdan chags*) on Katok's lion throne and maintain as one the teachings of the essence of adamantine clear light [i.e., Dzokchen], the sayings of the irreversible wheel of the essence (*snying po phyir mi ldog pa 'khor lo'i gtam*), and the instructions on the indivisibility of the fundamental wind and fundamental mind [a Kagyü teaching], thereby sustaining limitless sentient beings for as long as the victor's teachings remain.

Reviewing Tsewang Norbu's letters to the Dalai Lama, King of Degé, Situ Penchen, and Zhamar himself, it appears that this would-be reformer at Katok was trying to solve two different problems with the same solution. Regarding the first problem, Tsewang Norbu was concerned about the state of Katok during his time. He feared that with the loss of the Katok's "cultural integrity" (*lar rgya*; i.e., the Kama, meritocratic system of promotion through scholarship, and and monastic discipline) the monastery suffered under an inferior lama who neglected the upkeep of the temples and jeopardized the existence of the old traditions, which were already considerably weakened. This has been covered above. The second problem that Tsewang Norbu was trying to solve by installing the Zhamar at Katok was finding a home base for the Zhamar Rinpoche in Kham because he was not welcome or safe in Central Tibet. Tsewang Norbu apparently thought a Zhamar administration at Katok

would be mutually beneficial to the monastery and Zhamar. In other words, Tsewang Norbu tried to kill two birds with one stone. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the plan failed.

As mentioned above, the letters excerpted above were written after the attempted enthronement of Zhamar at Katok. The letters restate the case (perhaps even exaggerate it) and try to encourage the Dalai Lama and king of Degé to continue to support Tsewang Norbu's campaign. Historians are fortunate that these very illuminating documents are complemented by Situ Penchen's own autobiographical record of the event. Situ Penchen, of course, was Zhamar's primary custodian and participated fully in the enthronement ceremony at Katok. Nevertheless his *Autobiography* was finalized long after the enthronement and Tsewang Norbu's death, yet is a crucial source for the study of this event. Fortunately it mentions the logistics of the event and gives some clues as to the identity of the dissenters. Furthermore Situ's *Autobiography* makes it clear that there was personal fallout from the event for Situ. Later in Chapter Three, moreover, we will examine Situ's portrayal of Zhingkyong and appraise the dramatic differences in his understanding of Zhingkyong's character and monastic status.

In the summer of 1752 (late seventh lunar month) Situ Penchen and Zhamar were visiting the Dzachu (*rdza chu*) highlands, the northern nomadic regions of Degé, when a delivery person sent by Tsewang Norbu arrived at their camp bearing a letter and ceremonial scarves. The letter ordered Zhamar to go to Katok for

enthronement (*khrir pheb*).[236] Situ and Zhamar stay a couple more weeks in Dzachukha, visiting Washul and Getsé, and then head directly for Katok.

Situ's account of Zhamar's enthronement is as follows,[237]

> We arrived at Katok on the thirteenth day (of the eighth lunar month), together with the welcoming parties of the fort chief and various honor guards (?; *spel mda'*). In the assembly hall Zhingkyong gave presents on the occasion of the enthronement (*khri 'bul*) and there were good omens about (Zhamar) making his home in the lama's residence. Presents on the occasion of the enthronement were given on behalf of the Degé (court) by Lhundrup and Tsering Tashi. (At the ceremony) monks from Rongpo (Nyakrong?) and Golok (*'gu log*) misconstrued (*go ba gzhan rgyab*; the significance of the enthronement) and displayed some disgruntlement. Yet due to Zhingkyong's unwavering intention, at least the auspiciousness was not derailed. The next day fumigation and protector rites were carried out. Then a tour of the monastery and distribution of offerings were made; prayers for the expansion of the Karma Kagyü and Nyingma teachings were made;

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236 Situ Penchen, Autobiography and Diaries, 311.3; rig 'dzin chen po'i bka' ltar zhwa dmar mchog sprul kaH thog gi khrir pheb dgos pa'i mgul dar phul.

237 Ibid., 312.1; rdzong dpon dang spel mda' khag gi thab bsu bcas tshes bcu gsum la kaH thog rdo rje gdan du 'byor/ 'du khang du zhing skyong nas khri 'bul mdzad bla brang du bzhugs gnas ltas legs/ sde dges lhun grub dang tshe ring bkra shis nas khri 'bul byas/ rong po dang 'gu log sogs kyi gra pa rnams kyis go ba gzhan rgyab nas gtsub nyams [read rtsub nyams] cung zad bstan byung mod zhing skyong rang thugs g.yo 'gul med par bzhugs pa'i dbang gis rten 'byung ma 'phyugs tsam byung song/ phyi nyin bsangs dang bskang gso tshugs/ mchod 'jal dang mchod 'bul dang kar rnying gi bstan pa rgyas pa'i smon lam btab/ sgrol ma maN+Dal cho ga dang bskang gso btang/ dpal yul ba'i bla gra rnams byon khri 'bul gyi legs tshogs byung/ nor bu bstan pa spyi dbang byas/ dkon mchog spyi 'dus kyi tshogs brgya dang bskang gso btang/ btegs.

> and a Tārā maṇḍala ritual and protector rites were done. Lamas and monks of Pelyul came and their offering on the occasion of the enthronement went very well. I gave the General Initiation to the Jeweled Teachings[238] and we made the offering of the multitudes of the *dkon mchog spyi 'dus* and protector rites (312.1).

Thus Tsewang Norbu actually tried to enact his strategy to restore Katok's cultural integrity at Katok. Even though the historical record preserves his letters and Situ's firsthand account of this incident, many questions are left unanswered. For example, to what degree were Situ and the Degé royal court supportive of Zhamar's enthronement at Katok? Situ was certainly a key figure in helping Tsewang Norbu actually carry out his plan.

This account is fairly self-explanatory. The reasons why the enthronement did not succeed are less clear. Situ suggests that Zhingkyong was somewhat supportive of Zhamar's installation and that the culprits responsible for derailing the ceremony were just some insolent monks. However we may speculate what the deeper causes behind the unsuccessful ritual were. For one, the monks and administration at Katok may have been genuinely worried about a forced or erosive conversion to the Kagyü sect. As Situ Penchen was the most powerful lama in Degé at the time this was not a completely unfounded worry. Another possible reason for why the Zhamar was not accepted at Katok is that Tsewang Norbu had less clout than Drimé Zhingkyong. The

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[238] The nor bu bstan pa spyi dbang bya thabs chos spyod bcu nyams su len tshul dang bcas pa bstan pa'i tshal 'byed was written by the fifth Situ Rinpoché Chökyi Gyeltsen the latter (chos kyi rgyal mtshan phyi ma). This work is collected in the Anthology of Sādhanas (sgrub thabs kun btus; vol. 5, pp. 111-122).

latter actually lived at Katok and came from a much more illustrious lineage; he was the reincarnation of Longsel Nyingpo's son. Tsewang Norbu, to the contrary, had not been at Katok in almost thirty years and could not possibly have as many supporters at Katok as did Zhingkyong. Perhaps Tsewang Norbu had actually made enemies at Katok when he refused to accede to his master Sönam Deutsen's request that he take the throne at Katok. Tsewang Norbu had been invested with the title Katok Rindzin (*vidyādhara*) but he never lived up the expectations placed in him by the lamas of Katok. Thus at this late date it is not surprising that – from afar – he was unable to rally enough support for his audacious plan to enthrone Zhamar at Katok.

The primary reason that Tsewang Norbu's plan failed, however, must be that the vas t majority of lamas and monks at Katok did not share his overwhelming concern for the restoration of the Kama and rule by monks. Tsewang Norbu did make a strong case about the "original" Katok tradition being characterized by monasticism, a meritocratic system of succession, and a rigorous scholarly program. Nevertheless his inability to convince others of his judgements about the current state of Katok and the feasibility of his "solution" indicates that the decision makers at Katok did not agree with him. The usurpation of the Kama by Longsel Nyingpo's treasures and the ascendancy of reincarnate, hereditary, and non -celibate lamas apparently was not not an undesirable state of affairs to many lamas and monks of Katok Monastery in the mid-eighteenth century. If this theory is correct then it can be concluded that during Zhingkyong's reign the changes implemented by Longsel and those that occurred as an outgrowth of his impact on the monastery were still

enjoying preeminence at Katok. Using their methods Tsew ang Norbu, Situ Penchen, and Zhamar were unable to upset the new order at Katok.

Conclusion

In the middle of the eighteenth century Tsewang Norbu was deeply concerned about Katok's current state. In a series of libelous letters he spelled out his understanding of the original Katok traditions of a meritocratic mode of succession of ordained abbots, the central role of the Kama, and close relations with the Kagyü sect (especially the Karma Kagyü). Tsewang Norbu also strongly criticized the recent "devolutio n" from this earlier state. He blames the downturn in moral, scholastic, and managerial standards on the reign of the current head of Katok, Drimé Zhingkyong, but also implies that corruption is inevitable when scholastic meritocracy is replaced with hereditary and trülku-based modes of succession of the monastery's leadership. The next chapter will reveal that Tsewang Norbu's criticism's of Zhingkyong were greatly exaggerated, yet his assessment of the loss of studies and practice of the Kama is valid as well as his complaint about some of the key temples being in disrepair. His proposed solution, however, was ill conceived and was not accepted by the lamas and monks at Katok.

The Zhamar incident is a little -known moment in Katok's history but it reveals much about the situation of Katok in the middle of the eighteenth century and the first stirrings of reform. Thirty years after Tsewang Norbu's death reforms were made to Katok that Tsewang Norbu would have mostly agreed with. Ironically, they

were initiated by a trülku of Katok monastery recognized by Drimé Zhingkyong named Getsé Tsewang Chokdrup. He did reinstate the centrality of Kama studies and liturgies, but did so in a synthetic way that also preserved a prominent place at Katok for Dündul Dorjé's and Longsel Nyingpo's treasures and enshrined the many new trülku lines at the head of the administration. This organic resolution to the problems pointed out by Tsewang Norbu continues to be the dominant blueprint for the administration of the monastery and its liturgical, contemplative, and scholastic programs.

Chapter Three: Mid Eighteenth-Century Katok: The Supremacy of Trülkus and Longsel's Treasures, and the Revival of Celibate Monasticism

Chapter Two considered Tsewang Norbu's pessimistic view of Katok's recent history, defamatory claims against Zhingkyong, and failed attempt to install an associate in a leadership role at Katok in the early 1750s. In his letters, Tsewang Norbu placed all the blame for the monastery's "degeneration" on a specific lama (Zhingkyong) and suggested an equally simplistic solution to the loss of Katok's authentic traditions in the form of the appointment of Zhamar to lead the monastery. The current chapter examines this period from a much broader point of view, which contextualizes these issues in terms of the true diversity and power of internal and external factors that exerted influence on Katok during the early and mid-eighteenth century. We will see that during this period there was institutional ferment occurring at Nyin gma and Kagyü monasteries all over Degé, not just at Katok. Here I will focus on four major points that are especially salient for understanding the changes that occurred at Katok in the eighteenth century: the rise of trülkus, revival of celibate monastic ism, the popularity of classical learning, and the ascendancy of Mindrölling Monastery's teachings. Furthermore, against this general backdrop, I will examine the Katok-specific issue of the preeminence of the Longsel Nyingpo

revelations in its religious programs. After first examining the development and significance of these issues as they developed outside of Katok, the chapter concludes with a look at the early years of Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, a Katok lama whose life embodies these changes.

Dzokchen Monastery: Reincarnated Lamas and Printing at the Degé Printing House

This chapter will begin with an examination of Dzokchen Monastery, another central Nyingma monastery patronized by the Degé Kingdom and whose lamas had close relations with Katok figures such as Longsel Nyingpo and Sönam Deutsen. The last chapter demonstrated that in the first half of the eighteenth century reincarnated lamas at Katok came to supersede the power of the scholar lamas and even the blood descendants of Longsel Nyingpo. Drimé Zhingkyong was the chief representative of this type of lama. Dzokchen Monastery also saw a rapid rise of reincarnated lamas at this same time. Yet in terms of participation in mid-eighteenth-century Degé's most important royal project – publications at the new royal Printing Press – Dzokchen Mnastery was ahead of the curve. Exploring a neighboring monastery during the same period as considered in the last chapter will allow us to see that many of the issues at Katok about which Tsewang Norbu complained were broader sociological trends in Degé rather than the result of one person's mismanagement.[239]

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[239] The primary source for this section about Dzokchen Monastery is the *Index* (*dkar chag;* hereafter, *Index of the Seven Treasuries*) to the second Dzokchen Rinpoché's publication of Longchenpa's *Seven Treasuries*. The author is the Second Shechen Ranjam, Gyurmé Kunzang Namgyel (*zhe chen rab 'byams 'gyur med kun*

Pema Rindzin, the first Dzokchen Rinpoché, founded Dzokchen in 1685 and died in 1697.[240] As stated in Chapter One, Pema Rindzin was most likely a non-celibate master and soon after founding Dzokchen he requested the younger treasure revealer Nyima Drakpa – another non-monk – to take over the abbacy of the see. The latter refused the post and upon Pema Rindzin's death his other successors found and enthroned his reincarnation. The monastery is located in the highlands of northeast Degé and fell within the zone of influence of the kingdom.[241] This region was also under the control to varying degrees of the Right Banner (Barunagar) of the Oirat Mongols.[242] The Right Banner was the branch of the Oirat Mongol federation previously ruled by Longsel Nyingpo's patron Khandro Lobsang Tenkyong. Khandro had settled in nearby Dzachuka to the north of Dege but was assassinated by relatives in part for his conversion to the Nyingma sect. His younger brother Darkhan succeeded him and was apparently very powerful in much of Amdo and

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bzang rnam rgyal; 1713-1769), a younger brother and disciple of the Second Dzokchen Rinpoché. This is the earliest known source for the history of Dzokchen Monastery. Although this work was published in India thirty years ago with a descriptive English title western scholars of Nyingma and Eastern Tibetan history have largely overlooked this text. As will be seen below this work is an informative document for the study of later Nyingma literature, Nyingma institutions in Eastern Tibet, and publications in Degé during the mid-eighteenth century heyday of editing and printing in the kingdom. The Indian reprint edition of the *Seven Treasuries' Index* spans one-hundred and fifty-eight sides and is comprised of four chapters (*spyi don*). The third chapter contains a biography of the second Dzokchen Rinpoché Gyurmé Thekchok Tendzin (1699-1758), and his previous incarnations. The relevant material for this section will be culled from the biography of the second Dzokchen Rinpoché, whose life spans the post-Longsel period with which we are concerned.

240 See his biography in Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History*, 766-786.

241 The monastery lies in present-day Dzokchen Township (Zhuqing xiang 竹☒☒), Khorlondo District (*'khor lo mdo chus;* Keluodong qu 柯洛洞), Degé County.

242 Ricard, *The Life of Shabkar*, 565. On the same page Ricard describes the banners as follows, "The Mongolian nation was divided into a series of principalities or 'banners' (Tib. *dpon khag*, Mong. *khoshun*). Each was ruled by a Jasag (*ja sag*, pronounced *dzasa* by Tibetans), who could belong to any of the various ranks of the Mongolian nobility…." Over thirty such banners lived in the Kokonor area.

Kham, including the Degé area. In the 1730s king Tenpa Tsering challenged the Oirat Mongols for supremacy in the area and drove them from the areas around Dzokchen Monastery.[243]

Dzokchen and Katok monasteries can be differentiated in terms of their commitments to the Nyingma Kama literary and ritual tradition. Being a newly established monastery, Dzokchen was not burdened with having to negotiate changes in relationship to a long history, a self -image evolved over generations, and a complex array of prior traditions. In this sense, Dzokchen's situation was quite different from that of Katok, which saw itself as closely linked to Kama study and ritual for historical and traditional reasons. Rather, Dzokchen's founder Pema Rindzin, and thus his newly established monastery as well, were products of the late seventeenth century Nyingma tradition with its heavy emphasis on treasure practices. He did receive select, Kama initiations, such as the S ūtra Empowerment (*mdo dbang*), but his primary commitments were to the treasures and Dzokchen meditation. Pema Rindzin and his reincarnations were closely associated with the fourteenth century treasure cycle the Innermost Spirituality of the Ḍākinīs (*mkha' 'gro snying thig*) cycle.[244]

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[243] Kolmaš, *A Genealogy of the Kings of Derge*, 37 and 118. The latter page number refers to the location in the Tibetan text where it mentions his defeat of the local Oirat king. The text reads, "By the power of (the Degé king's) excellent merit, the evil power of the Oirat king – who is from the backwoods – came to work against him and (now) only the name (of the tribe) remains" (*mchog gi bsod nams stobs kyis mtha' yi mi/ ur lod rgyal po'i ngan stobs rang gshed du/ gyur nas ming gi lhag ma nyid du gyur*).

[244] Dahl, Great Perfection, xi.

Dzokchen’s mode of succession was similarly hybrid and not complicated by prior commitments to one modality or another. Pema Rindzin was a close associate of Treasure revealer Nyima Drakpa (*gter ston nyi ma grags pa*; 1647-1710) and once Dzokchen had been founded, Pema Rindzin asked the younger Nyima Drakpa to serve as its abbot.[245] Nyima Drakpa initially accepted the offer but then withdrew his acceptance, citing prophesies from certain Treasures. In fact, after Pema Rindzin’s passing in 1697 he was again pressed to take over the monastery and again refused. Dzokchen Pönlop (*rdzogs chen dpon slob*) instead took the helm at Dzokchen after Pema Rindzin's passing. Dzokchen Pönlop Namkha Ösel (*nam mkha’ ’od gsal*) was from Kham and in his youth was involved in some violent ritual activity and also studied tantric practices under a Kagyü lama. He met Pema Rindzin when he was practicing at various pilgrimages spot in Central Tibet. He was not a monk.[246]

After Pema Rindzin’s death, his “reincarnation” was identified and brought to the monastery as young child. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that a child of an Oirat Mongol was recognized as the second Dzokchen Rinpoché.[247] Furthermore, all three

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[245] This story is recounted in detail in Cuevas, *Hidden History of the Tibetan Book of the Dead,* 195.

[246] See Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History,* 784-787, for a detailed biography of him; Cf. Luntok Tenpé Nyima, *Abbatial Succession of Dzokchen Monastery*, 331-333.

[247] The account of his birth and genealogy in the *Seven Treasuries' Index* reads, “He was born into the family line (*rigs*) of the *bdag gnyer 'tsho skyong* (manager of livelihoods?) of the sons of king Kunga Déching (rgyal po kun dga' da'i chings), Nomachi Téji (no ma chi tha'i ji), and others. In their native language (the family line) is called Darkhan Urluk (*dar khan ur lug*). They branch off from one section of the forty nomadic groups (*tsho pa*) of Oirats (under) the leader of the White Tent, who are based along the Da River valley (*zla klung*);” *Seven Treasuries' Index*, p. 88.3; *byang phyogs zla klung gi 'gram du gur dkar po'i bdag po/ o rod tsho pa bzhi bcu'i nang tshan las gyes pa/ rgyal po kun dga' da'i chings dang/ no ma chi tha'i ji la sogs pa'i sras kyi bdag gnyer 'tsho skyong pa la yul skad du dar khan ur lug tug rags pa'i rigs su.*

of the other founding masters of Dzokchen – Nyima Drakpa, Zhechen Ranjam, and Dzokchen Pönlop – spawned reincarnation lineages that remained closely involved with Dzokchen over the generations.[248] Thus we see that at Dzokchen the initial mode of succession was fluid but within a generation consolidated around a trülku-based model of abbatial succession.

We now turn to the topic of Dzokchen lamas and the royal court at Degé. The apparently well-connected second Dzokchen Rinpoché was the first Nyingma lama to publish texts at the new Degé Printing House (*sde dge par khang*) during an era of massive publishing endeavors in Degé. In 1755 the second Dzokchen Rinpoche published Longchenpa's *Seven Treasuries* and other writings in a four-volume set.[249] By the time that Dzokchen Rinpoché planned to produce this new edition of these works, the royal court had already published the Kangyur, Tengyur, and the *Collected Works of the Sakya Masters* (*sa skya bka' 'bum*) through the same publishing house. However, no notable collection of Nyingma writings had yet been

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[248] The Nyima Drakpa and Ponlop trulku's both made Dzokchen their primary seats and the second Zhechen Ranjam founded founded his own monastery close to Dzokchen.

[249] The Degé edition of Longchenpa's *Seven Treasuries* contains four volumes of Longchenpa's writing and the *Index* by the second Shechen Ranjam Rinpoché. The contents include all seven of his major Dzokchen treatises, the so-called *Treasuries*, his commentary on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, and his *Trilogy of Comfort and Ease*. The detailed catalog of each volume is found in the *Index to the Seven Treasuries,* 126-130. The *Index* states that the editorial team began in 1753, headed by Zhuchen with two assistants from the Nyingma hermitage of Muksang. After the editors had finalized their edition of the collection, eighteen scribes and over three hundred carvers labored to create the woodblocks for all four volumes. In total, the entire endeavor including editing, carving, and composition of the index took over two years and was completed in the spring of 1755. The *Index* even names the King Lodrö Püntsok (*blo gros phun tshogs*) as the supervisor (*do dam pa*) of the operation. Zhuchen also wrote benedictory verses and a printing colophon (*par byang*) in which he confirms his role as editor of the *Seven Treasuries*. The fourth Dzokchen Rinpoché Mingyur Namkha Dorjé (mi 'gyur nam mkha'i rdo rje; 1793-1870) commissioned a revised edition of the Degé edition of the *Seven Treasuries* – in five volumes – in the middle of the nineteenth century.

committed to woodblocks at the prestigious Degé Printing House. Dzokchen Rinpoché was no doubt aware of this lacuna. At this time being associated with a publishing project at the royal printing house was a marker of very high status in the upper echelons of the Degé religious scene. The second Dzokchen Rinpoché's ability to participate in a project at the Printing House speaks to his high standing with the royal court. Furthermore, the lama's hagiography was immortalized in the newly reprinted collection's *Index*, which the Publishing House still maintains in print to this day.

Even though the second Dzokchen Rinpoché was the publisher and the second Ranjam wrote the *Index*, neither were the chief editors of their edition of the *Seven Treasuries.* Instead, the head editor of the collection was the Sakya master Zhuchen Tsultrim Rinchen (*zhu chen tshul khrims rin chen*).[250] On the face of it he was an unexpected choice due to being from a different sect, but perhaps he was asked because he possessed famed editing skills greatly superior to any of the Nyingma lamas in the region. Yet he was not an acknowledged expert in Nyingma literature and thought, which feature many terms and doctrines not found in Sarma texts or the *śastras* of the Tengyur with which he was most familiar. However, another explanation is more likely, namely that Shuchen was asked to be the person responsible for editing the content of this collection because without his endorsement it would have encountered resistance from anti-Nyingma partisans in the Sakya-

[250] Jackson, *A History of Tibetan Painting,* ch. 12, gives a sketch of Zhuchen's life and relations with the Degé royal court.

influenced court. I find it implausible that no local Nyingma lama was capable of editing the texts, and suspect that the Dzokchen lamas decided they would have more success executing this project if the Sakya court chaplain was centrally involved. The fact that Zhuchen was the chief editor of the *Seven Treasuries* suggests to me that in the mid-eighteenth century Nyingma lamas did not yet have the cachet to single-handedly execute publication projects at the Degé Printing House. This is not to say that the court did not generally support Nyingma institutions and cults, such as in the founding of Dzokchen Monastery itself. Yet the central role of Zhuchen in the publication of the *Seven Treasuries* suggests there was still a glass ceiling, so to speak, when it came to Nyingma lamas being chief editors at the Printing House. This state of affairs would change dramatically in the next generation when the Katok lama Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita became the chief editor for publications of much larger Nyingma collections at the Printing House. Foremost among his editorial efforts was the Degé edition of the *Collected Tantras of the Ancients* in twenty-five volumes.

This brief examination of Dzokchen Monastery has shown that reincarnate lamas were on the ascendancy in the eighteenth century not only at Katok. Although Tsewang Norbu found it to be an aberration for Katok, these trülkus have retained their high statuses at the Nyingma monasteries in Degé to the present. In the previous chapter I pointed out that prior to the eighteenth century, reincarnate lamas were not the dominant mode of succession in elite Nyingma religious communities, including communities that developed around Treasure revealers. Family lines centered on a

biologically transmitted spiritual charisma were much more prominent than the non-biological reincarnate lines among the Nyingma. Perhaps an impetus for the growth of trülkus at both Dzokchen and Katok (and Pelyül too) was a demand from Degé royal court for a regularized mode of succession over which they could exert a degree of control. In the next section we will turn to another major development in institutional religion in Kham that influenced Katok, the revival of celibate monasticism.

Situ Penchen and His Monastic Revival in Eighteenth-Century Kham

A key but underappreciated facet of mid-eighteenth century religion in Degé, and Kham more broadly, was the revival of celibate monasticism in Kagyü and Nyingma monasteries. The primary lama behind the expansion of celibate monasticism at this time was Situ Penchen (*si tu paN chen chos kyi 'byung gnas*; 1700-74). He directed some of his efforts towards ordaining Katok lamas and monks, and to this day is recognized by Katok as the source of their current ordination line.[251] In this section we will chronicle his life-long endeavor to ordain monks in Kham, highlight the numerous times he gave ordination to large numbers of new monks in the Katok and Pelyül communities, and analyze the contents of his monastic customaries (*bca' yig*). In fact, Drimé Zhingkyong took full ordination under Situ Penchen and encouraged

[251] Khenpo Sönam Tenpa, personal communication, 2006.

other Katok monks to also ordain as celibate monks. Contrary to what Tsewang Norbu wrote in his letters, Zhingkyong was actually a monastic reformer at Katok.

Situ Penchen was the leading religious figure in eighteenth-century Degé and the chief lama of the Karma Kagyü sect for many decades in the middle of the century. Few activities recur in Situ Penchen's *Autobiography* as often as monastic ordinations. In his life story, Situ documented dozens of ordinations, often noting the names of important ordinands and the number of monks at nearly every ceremony.[252] These records are a testament to Situ's lifelong mission to propagate monasticism at Kagyü and Nyingma monasteries in Kham. Situ Penchen's decades of tirelessly officiating over ordination ceremonies throughout Kham had a profound impact at large monasteries such as Katok. I contend that Situ's widespread and longterm efforts to ordain hundreds and hundreds of monks rises to the level of a campaign or revival movement.

Were Situ more self-reflective about his concerns and projects then he may have actually stated that this was a core concern of his. Following the conventions of the genre of the outer autobiography made popular by the fifth Dalai Lama, Situ was very impersonal and episodic in his diary-like *Autobiography.* Janet Gyatso says these works tend to "recount one experience or deed after another, with little explicit

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[252] Many years ago Gene Smith wrote a groundbreaking introduction to his *Autobiography* that covers the intellectual features of Situ's time period and his prominent role in it (this work has been reprinted as Chapter seven in Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*). Smith also gives an account of the composition of the work. He notes that the work is a compilation of a partial autobiography covering Situ's life up until the end of his 25th year (by Tibetan counting) and Belo Tsewang Kunkhyab's treatment of Situ's "diaries" for the remaining 50 years. However, as Smith says (93), the transition between these heterogeneous parts is "seamless."

linkage or sense of cohesive development other than the reiterated 'I have done this and this.'"[253] Nevertheless several contemporaneous and historical factors can be adduced to explain in part the rise of Vinaya-based monasticism in Degé at this time. For one, the royal court at this time maintained a model of kingship in which the king was an ordained bodhisattva. After the death of the renowned king Tenpa Tsering – who was lay because he was the only surviving male of his generation – the son who succeeded him was a monk. The prince's ordination name was Püntsok Tenpa (*phun tshogs bstan pa*) and upon his father's death in 1738 he quickly took full ordination and became the king.[254] He also continued his father's endeavor to print new editions of the canon and was the chief patron of the Degé edition of the Tengyur, completed in 1743. Therefore the importance that the royal court placed on monasticism may have contributed to Situ's passion to spread monasticism in Kham. Furthermore the Karma Kagyü School has a long history with monasticism. Perhaps the monastic state of the Lhasa's Ganden Podrang also exerted an influence on Situ Penchen's campaign.

Situ represents himself as being very deliberate about his own ordination. When visiting with treasure revealer Rolpé Dorjé (d. 1720) in 1719, one of his oldest teachers, the elderly lama told Situ of the many prophecies and signs indicating Situ's destined role in his community, which would have entailed a non-celibate

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[253] Apparitions of the Self, 109.

[254] Kolmas, A Genealogy of the Kings of Derge, 40-41.

lifestyle.[255] Situ politely but firmly refused the invitation with a number of excuses. The final excuse was that he wanted to take full ordination, to which Situ records that the lama finally gave his assent.[256] Rolpé Dorjé died the following year and Situ conducted the funeral but did not succeed the lama as the head of his followers. Rather Situ carried out his plans and soon after underwent full ordination.

Situ took full ordination while on an extended stay at Tsurpu Monastery[257] in early 1723. Situ's main gurus officiated the ordination ceremony, with the eighth Zhamar Chökyi Döndrup serving as preceptor (*mkhan po*) and the fourth Treho Rinpoché (*tre ho rin po che*; 1653-1730) as interviewer (*gsang ste ston pa*).[258] Situ concludes the account of his ordination with a statement about how his feeble merit handicapped him from observing all the vows strictly to the letter of the law, yet his

[255] Situ Penchen, *Autobiography*, 61.3. *Guru Trashi's History* contains a profile of Rolpé Dorjé (Ngawang Lodro, 575-576). A title in Situ Penchen's *Collected Works* is putatively a biography of Rolpé Dorjé but upon close inspection it seems to be simply a collection of early verse by Situ that is not about Rolpé Dorjé (*rig 'dzin dbang phyug rol pa'i rdo rje'i rnam par thar pa dbyangs can mgul gyi sgra dbyangs,* vol. 10, pp. 1-35). Further research is required on this text to determine what relationship it has to Rolpé Dorjé's life story.

[256] Ibid., 62.2; The passage reads kho bo dge slong gi sdom pa zhig kyang zhu 'dod che bas kyis kyang gnang dgos shes [read ces] pheb phyung.

[257] Ibid., 95.6.

[258] This was the third Treho incarnation and his full name was Karma Tendzin Dargyé (*kar+ma bstan 'dzin dar rgyas).* Situ's nephew Sampel (*dbon po bsam 'phel*) also took full ordination on that day, presumably alongside Situ. Zhamar gave Situ the ordination name Karma Tenpé Nyinché Tsuklak Chökyi Nangwa (*kar+ma bstan pa'i nyin byed chos kyi snang ba*)*;* Situ's ordination is also covered in the long profile of Situ in the extensive collection of biographies Karma Kagyu lamas authored begun by Situ and completed by his Belo Tsewang Kunkhyab (*'be lo tshe dbang kun khyab*), *The Collected Biographies of the Precious Karma Kagyü Lineage* (*sgrub brgyud kar+ma kaM tshang brgyud pa rin po chei rnam par thar pa rab 'byams nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba zhes bya ba'i pu sti ka phyi ma*), 456.5.

respect for the ordination compelled him to take advantage of every fortnight confession ceremony to purify all his infractions.[259]

Situ's career as an *officiant* of ordinations began almost immediately after his own ordination. The month after his ordination a group of forty-five monks from Tramgu (*khra 'gu*) monastery[260] and Kongpo (*kong po*) came to Tsurphu seeking full ordination from Zhamar.[261] The latter asked Situ to serve as the interviewer for these ordination, probably because of the high rank of his trülku line. This presented Situ with a dilemma because the Vinaya states that a monk must wait ten years after his own full ordination before he can give full ordination to another monk.[262] Situ overcomes this dilemma through appeal to the higher authorities of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna morality. "Generally speaking, in this lineage the lama's statements are taken as essential, even more so than any textually-based mode of explanation or presentation…"[263] As his own master Zhamar ordered him to participate in the

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[259] Situ Penchen*, Autobiography*, 96.5.

[260] Tramgu Monastery (*khra 'gu bkra shis bshad sgrub chos 'khor gling*) is located in Yühru County, Qinghai; Cf. The Monasteries of Yulshul County (*yul shul rdzong: dgon sde'i lo rgyus mdor bsdus*), 50-54 and Jamyang Tsültrim, *Brief History of Upper Kham Eastern Tibet*, 46.

[261] Situ Penchen, *Autobiography*, 97.2.

[262] *Ibid,* 97.3, *'dul ba lugs la bsnyen par rdzogs nas lo hril po'am phyed lo bcu ma song bar de rigs 'os min.* In Tibet, if not in India and elsewhere, the meaning of the "ten year" interval between ordination and conferral was subject to creative interpretation. For instance, in this passage Situ says, "According to Vinaya custom, it is not acceptable (to confer full ordination) until ten full or half years have passed since (one's own) full ordination." When someone could not wait a full ten years to participate in a full ordination ceremony he could instead wait only ten "half years" (i.e., five years total) and consider it enough.

[263] Ibid., 97.3; spyir rgyud pa 'dir lung gi bshad tshul dang rnam gzhag gang las kyang bla mas gsungs pa de snying por bzung bas.

ordination of these visiting monks, he felt the command of this Buddha in the flesh overruled the dictates of the Prātimokṣa Discipline.

Situ eventually returned to Degé from central Tibet and became very close with the king of Degé Tenpa Tsering, whose power in the region was growing at this time.[264] In 1726 the latter ordered Situ to found a new monastery on the eastern side of the Drichu, all of which was newly under the control of the Qing Empire.[265] From at least the time of the third Situ, Trashi Peljor (*bkra shis dpal 'byor;* 1498-1541), the Situ lamas had been closely associated with Karma Monastery (*kar+ma dgon*), on the west side of the Drichu River.[266] For unstated reasons Situ wanted to establish a new home monastery squarely within the Degé state. Later that year Situ selected the site for his new monastery, which he named Pelpung Thubten Chökor Ling (*dpal spungs thub bstan chos 'khor gling*). The foundation was laid in the spring of 1727 and the consecration of the completed monastery was performed in 1729.[267] Pelpung quickly became one of the greatest centers of learning and contemplation in all of Kham and retained that distinction through the early twentieth century.[268] During this time Situ was also charged with editing the Degé edition of Kangyur commissioned

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[264] Kolmas, A Genealogy of the Kings of Derge, 37-39.

[265] Situ Penchen*, Autobiography,* 140.7.

[266] Karma Gyeltsen, History of the Karma Kagyu and Pelpung Monastery, 81-100.

[267] Situ Penchen*, Autobiography,* 141.5-147.5; this page range covers the entire span of the construction, decoration, and consecration of Pelpung Monastery.

[268] Cf. Karma Gyeltsen's new sourcebook of primary sources about Pelpung and its lamas, The History of Pelpung Thubten Chönkhorling.

by Tenpa Tsering, which he completed in 1733.[269] Situ also began his long career as the head officiant of ordinations.

In 1729 Situ made one of his numerous trips to Lijiang (in Yunnan) and while there officiated over the ordination of many monks from local K arma Kagyü monasteries.[270] His terse record of the ceremony states, “On the twenty-fifth day (of the seventh lunar month) I performed the full ordination of around a hundred monks."[271] In the ninth month of the same year, and while still in the Lijiang area, Situ performed a few more full ordination ceremonies.[272] From this point Situ rarely passes more than a year between ordinations. Throughout his life he ordained over a thousand monks in eastern Tibet and the border regions, including Degé, Lijiang, and Gyelrong.

For our present purposes, however, our focus is on Situ's ordination of Nyingma monks. Situ’s involvement in the spread of celibate monasticism to the Nyingma monks of Degé commenced in 1740.[273] Situ Penchen's *Autobiography* does not give any indication as to why relations with Nyingma monasteries such as Katok and Pelyül were intensifying at this time. One contributing factor might have been that for a dozen or more years preceding this year Situ had been incredibly busy. Situ

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[269] CF. Schaeffer, The Culture of the Book in Tibet.

[270] CF. Debreczeny, “Bodhisattvas South of the Clouds: Situ Panchen’s Activities and Artistic Inspiration in Yunnan.”

[271] Situ Penchen, *Autobiography,* 150.2; *nyer lnga nyin grwa pa brgya skor la bsnyen rdzogs bsgrubs.* The ordination took place at Okmin Ling Monastery (*'og min gling*) in the Lijiang area.

[272] Ibid., 150.5; bsnyen dzogs 'ga' re bsgrubs.

[273] 1740 was an iron monkey year (*lcags spre lo*).

worked on his new monastery from 1727-1729; Traveled to Lijiang from 1729-1730; Worked on the Kangyur from 1731-1734; Spent two years in central Tibet between 1734-1736 attending to the funerals of the Karmapa and Zhamarpa; Officiated the funeral of the king of Degé Tenpa Tsering in 1738; And returned to Lijiang in the winter of 1738 until the following year. Situ was busy his entire life yet the decade of the 1740s, when he was involved with Katok and Pelyul, were less hectic than the preceding decade.

This is a special year in the Guru Rinpoché cult, since Padmasambhava is believe to have been magically born in a lotus on the tenth day of the monkey month of a monkey year. Followers of Nyingma traditions celebrate a communal ritual in honor of Guru Rinpoché every tenth day of the lunar month, with large annual festivals on the tenth day of every monkey month.[274] Furthermore, the monkey *year* comes once every twelve years. Thus on the tenth day of the monkey month of the monkey year, 1740, Situ Rinpoché held a large festival at Pelpung to worship Guru Rinpoché. He writes, “This monkey year we elaborately performed the masked dance of the Nyingma tradition's Great Tenth Day Celebration on the tenth day of the monkey month." [275] The Degé royal family came to the event and gave money towards the annual celebration of this festival. Large segments of the monastic

[274] The timing of this month varies between the different calendrical systems.

[275] Situ, Autobiography, 191.7; sprel lo rnying lugs kyi sprel zla'i tshes bcu chen mo'i 'chams rgyas par bgyis.

population of Pelyül and Rakchab (*rag chab*)[276] monasteries – both Nyingma – attended the festival. On the nineteenth of the monkey month Situ gave three days of ordinations to the assembled Nyingma monks. The *Autobiography* reads, "On the nineteenth day I performed the full ordination for 105 monks from Pelyül and here (i.e., Pelpung). The next day I performed the full ordination for 119 monks and the novice ordination for eighty. The following day I performed the full ordination for about 100 monks from Ragchab."[277] Thus about one hundred monks from each of these two local Nyingma monasteries were given full ordination, an impressive number from any perspective. Three years later, in 1743, Si tu went to Pelyül Monastery. At the monastery Situ ordained forty monks from Pelyül and elsewhere, bestowing on some the tonsure ceremony and others full ordination.[278]

According to Tsewang Norbu's 1752 letters, Drimé Zhingkyong was a corrupt lama who embezzled money and let the temples fall apart. This is contradicted in Situ's *Autobiography,* where Situ Penchen records that in the second month of the lunar year beginning in 1745 Zhingkyong took full ordination under Situ Penchen himself. The account reads, "By means of the threefold formula (*tshig gsum*), I performed the full ordination ceremony for about fifty: Katok Zhingkyong, Samar lama, Tsewang Trinlé and others, including (monks) from Kyapché (*skyabs che ba*)

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[276] This place name is also spelled *rab khyab* and *rak chab.* A history of Rakchab Monastery is found in *The History of the Monasteries of Kardze Prefecture,* v. 3, 221-225.

[277] Situ, Autobiography, 192.3; bcu dgur dpal yul dang 'di'i grwa pa brgya dang lnga bsnyen rdzogs bsgrubs/ phyi nyin grwa pa brgya dang bcu dgu bsnyen rdzogs dang brgyad cu skor dge tshul dang/ phyi nyin yang rag chab pa brgya skor bsnyen rdzogs bsgrubs.

[278] Ibid., 214.3

and (Pelpung) monastery."[279] Situ portrays Zhingkyong to be a decent enough lama who is interested in high teachings and upholds the discipline of a fully ordained monk. This may come as a surprise given Tsewang Norbu's later accusations, but Zhingkyong's monastic status is also confirmed in Getsé's short biography of Zhingkyong and Khenpo Jamyang's recent *Brief History of Katok*.[280]

After several years of intensive travel and diplomacy related to the death of the young ninth Zhamar and recognition of the tenth Zhamar, in the spring of 1750 Situ resumed ordaining Nyingma monks in Degé. That year one hundred monks and lamas from Pelyül visited Pelpung and Situ gave full ordination to about forty of them.[281] Shortly afterwards, Zhingkyong led approximately one hundred Katok monks to Pelpung.[282] Situ gave special Kalacakra teachings to Zhingkyong and the Katok monks. This was followed by a full ordination ceremony for around forty Katok monks (*kaH thog gi grwa pa bzhi bcu skor bsnyen rdzogs bsgrubs*).[283] Subsequent ordinations of monks from Pelyül, Katok, and other local Nyingma monasteries are recorded in Situ’s *Autobiography*.[284] Eventually the lamas of Katok

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[279] *Ibid.,* p. 223.2.

[280] Getse Mahapandita, Inventory of Drimé Zhingkyong’s Reliquary, p. 111; and Jamyang Gyeltsen, Brief History of Katok, 104.

[281] Situ Penchen, *Autobiography*, 299.7

[282] Ibid., 300.3;

[283] This is one of only a small amount of precise details about the number of Katok monks engaged in a particular activity. As no figures on the overall number of monks at the monastery are available it is impossible what percentage of the monastic population is represented by these forty monks.

[284] I do not believe that a sizable number of monks from Katok or Pelyül took full ordination under Situ Penchen multiple times. Renewal of vows does occur but is not so common in Tibet that the figures provided by Situ might be skewed because of numerous cases of re-ordination.

and Pelyül who were ordained by Situ began to give monastic ordination to their own monks, and these lineages persist to the present day.[285]

The data indicates that in the 1740s and 50s, and beyond, there was a groundswell of celibate monasticism spreading through some Nyingma monasteries in Kham, including Katok. Katok participated in and was profoundly affected by this development at the Kagyü and Nyingma monasteries of Degé. Unfortunately we do not have do not have precise data on the number of celibate monks prior to this or if monks from other monasteries were also giving ordination at Katok. Regardless, what is significant is that the head of Katok took full ordination. As the leader of the community his example must have gradually had an effect on the moral dimension of the community. Furthermore, Zhingkyong's ordination demonstrates that – *contra* Tsewang Norbu – celibate monasticism and trülku succession were not incompatible and actually went together at Katok.

Situ's Monastic Customaries

In addition to ordaining monks at numerous monasteries in Kham, Situ also wrote several monastic customaries (*bca' yig*). Cabezón says, "Although all Buddhist monks and nuns in Tibet follow as their principle discipline the monastic vows as set forth in the Indian Buddhist vinaya tradition of the Mūlasarvāstivādin sect, Tibetan monasteries felt a need to supplement this general discipline with more specific documents that focused on the practical aspects of daily life: the *cha-yig* [*bca' yig*,

[285] Katok abbot Khenpo Sönam Tenpa, personal communication, 2006.

monastic customary]."[286] Volume Ten of his *Collected Works* contains at least six different monastic customaries[287] and his *Autobiography* mentions other customaries that do not seem to be included in the *Collected Works.*[288] The customaries authored by Situ Penchen range from short works that appear to have been written in haste to fuller treatments that refer to advanced topics in Buddhist ethics and morality. In most cases they were written for small monasteries he visited on his travels. These documents provide an illuminating perspective on the issues faced by monasteries in the process of reviving celibate monasticism and in the quotidian duties of everyday community organization. As such they complement the accounts of ordinations given in Situ's *Autobiography*, filling out the picture of his monastic revival.

One of Situ Penchen's monastic customaries is especially pertinent to the situation at Katok monastery during the time when Situ and Zhingkyong are reviving celibate monasticism at Katok. This customary was written for Püntsok Dargyé Ling (*phun tshogs dar rgyas gling*) monastery, which is likely in Yuhru (*yus hru'u* or *yul shul*; in northern Kham; present -day Qinghai). After the opening segment Situ recounts that in the past this institution had a monastic customary, but that the

[286] "The Regulations of a Monastery," 243; Cech, "A Bonpo bCa'-yig: the Rules of the sMan-ri Monastery;" and Ellingson, "Tibetan Monastic Constitutions: the bCa'-Yig."

[287] Situ's monastic customaries are not collected into a unified collection *per se*. They are found within a diverse group of miscellanea that contains edicts to harmful sprits and gods, travel documents (*lam yig*), and other "legalistic" writings. The table of contents to the parent volume (vol. 10) calls this miscellanea the *shi'u gsin gyi lo rgyus sogs sna tshogs/ legs sbyar klog thabs nyung ngu rnam gsal/ sme brtsegs sngags on snang srid lha 'dre la spring yig/ dgon sde khag gi bca' yig le'u mtshan bcas,* 125-170.

[288] For instance, in 1739 Situ wrote a monastic customary for a monastery in Lijiang (*'jang*) that his nephew Sampel translated into Chinese; Situ Penchen, *Autobiography*, 182.7; *bca' yig dang tshogs su bca' bsgrigs gi bkod pa byas bsam 'phel gyis lo tsA bsgyur ba yin*. In the record for 1757 in his *Autobiography* Situ mentions the composition a monastic customary (for Tramgu Monastery) that is not in his *Collected Works*; 350.3; *khra 'gu'i bca' yig bris*.

ravages of time had resulted in this once pure monastery being overtaken by "non-celibate priests" (*'ban btsun*) who did not desire to conform to monastic customs (*lugs mthun gyi re che ma mchis*).[289] The Tibetan term translated as non-celibate monk is *'ban btsun* and appears to be a colloquialism local to just one region of Tibet.[290] Situ clearly thinks it is unfortunate that the monastic discipline was "lost" (*shor*) to non-celibate "monks" and distinguished between celibate and non-celibate monks. This recalls Tsewang Norbu's complaints that Katok had lost its monastic traditions.

In the body of this monastic customary Situ begins with a presentation of the four defeats (*pham pa bzhi; catvāraḥ pārājikā dharmāḥ*), which are root transgressions of the monastic regime.[291] According to the Pratimokṣa, an infraction of any one of the four defeats leads to expulsion from the monastic order for life. The first defeat Situ discusses is the prohibition against sexual intercourse. In fact, the first defeat is the rule against murder and in every other customary preserved in his *Collected Works* it is the first one covered. At Püntsok Dargyé Ling Situ may have felt a greater sense of urgency to admonish the monks of this monastery not to sleep

[289] Situ Penchen, *Monastic Customaries*, 141.2.

[290] I asked Thupten Püntsok and Khenpo Ngawang Dorjé but neither had ever seen this term, though they did agree with me that the term means non-celibate "monk."

[291] Situ Penchen, *Monastic Customaries*, 141.2.

with women than to avoid killing people. Situ's explanation of the rule is also tailored to address the recent history of this monastery. It reads,[292]

> Regarding the matter of celibacy, women are never to be lodged in the monastery overnight. If (such an) evident blemish (*mngon gsal gyi nag bag*) occurs within (the community of) pure monks, then many monks must expose the crime. If the sin is concealed, then (the offending monk) must be expelled following procedure.

Knowing that it might be difficult to enforce absolute celibacy among a community where many older monks were non-celibate, Situ is especially lenient towards offenders. Situ continues, "If from the beginning (of the incident) the monk admits the infraction with regret, then reinstate him in the training."[293] The *Vinaya* states that a monk who penetrates another living being with his penis even the length of a sesame seed is guilty of a defeat, but here Situ is not taking such a hard line.

Situ even directly addresses the sexual morality of the married lamas in this section. He writes, "The non-celibate priests (*'ban btsun*; should) receive the layperson's vows and act as bona fide (holders of the vows) by restraining from sexual impropriety in accordance with them."[294] Situ concludes this part about celibacy by writing, "From now on all those committed (to the monastery) as monks

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[292] Ibid.; mi tshangs spyod kyi char dgon par mtshan mo bud med gtan nas 'jog sa med cing grwa gtsang rnams la mngon gsal gyi nag khag byung na grwa mang gis mtshang 'don zhing sdig pa rang gsang byed na bsgrigs nas 'don.

[293] Ibid., 141.3; thog ma nas 'gyod sems kyis nongs pa khas len nab slabs pa bskyar du 'jug.

[294] Ibid., 'ban btsun rnams kyis kyang dge bsnyen gyi sdom pa nod cing de mthun byi bo srung ba sogs tshad ldan byed.

should not go down paths that deviate from the conduct of pure monks."[295] After covering all four of the defeats, Situ then offers guidelines for the group rituals, again addressing the non -celibate priests; "Because during the assemblies (*tshogs*) the married lamas may not transgress even the layperson's vows, they should not wear the accessories or clothes of an ordinary householder, such as pants, swords around their waists (*rkad gri*), and long hair (*rbad mgo*)."[296]

This monastic customary reveals that some monasteries in Kham had mixed communities, housing both celibate and noncelibate "monks." Furthermore this text clearly indicates that even though there might be a group of monks at a given monastery who want to reestablish the vows of celibate monasticism after many generations of decline, the affiliated non-celibate monks continued to be a part of the monastery and even participate in the assemblies. Again it must be said that we do not have reliable figures on the numbers and types of monks at Katok, yet this customary is suggestive about the kinds of dilemmas and arrangements that Zhingkyong and his contemporaries may have faced there.[297]

Cleary Situ sees the disappearance of ordained monks and the ascendancy of married monks at Püntsok Dargyé Ling as an unfortunate period in their history. Situ slights the married monks throughout, even suggesting their way of life is a "wrong

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[295] Ibid., da nas bzung grwa par 'jog tshad gtsang btsun byed pa las log lam du mi sbyor.

[296] Ibid., tshogs kyi skabs 'ban btsun yin yang dge bsnyen gyi sdom pa tsam dang mi mbstun ka med phyir dor ma rkad gri rbad mgo sogs khyim pa dkyus ma'i chas gos mi byed.

[297] Cf. Ortner, *High Religion*, 188-192, for an insightful account of a similar transition from non-celibacy to celibacy at a small monastery in a Sherpa community in Nepal. She characterizes the change from the one state to the other as a "revolution."

path" (*log lam*). Nevertheless Situ Penchen tries to reconcile the two communities. For instance, he does not take an antagonistic approach and advocate the dismissal of all married monks. Rather, Situ allows for them to still maintain their participation in the community, albeit with a status inferior to that of the ordained monks.

Before concluding this section about Situ Penchen's influential efforts to spread celibate monasticism in Degé, including at Nyingma monasteries such as Katok, another of Situ's historic "campaigns" will be introduced. Situ also devoted himself to improving the Tibetan translations of Indian texts on the literary arts. Gene Smith summarizes this work as follows, "After the tedium of editing the *Bka' 'gyur* was finished, Si tu turned to a project that was to occupy him for the rest of his life: the re-examination and revision of all existing translations of the Sanskrit grammatical, lexicographic, and poetic treatises that constitute the basis for Tibetan philological studies."[298] The chief editor of the Degé edition of the Tengyur and Longchenpa's *Seven Treasuries,* Zhuchen Tsultrim Rinchen, was also a proponent of classical learning. The two lamas gained their prestigious roles as leaders of Degé's publications because of their mastery of the literary arts. As the kingdom sought to accrue respectability through the philological rigor and readability of its editions of the canons, the value placed on expertise in the literary arts likewise increased. Situ's and Zhuchen's students trained Katok lamas in the literary arts, who in turn made

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[298] Smith, Among Tibetan Texts, 91.

training in them important at Katok in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as we will see in the following section.

The preceding sections of this chapter have demonstrated that important new developments and trends were afoot in eighteenth century Degé monasteries overall. These include the rise of reincarnate lamas at Nyingma monasteries, the spread of celibate monasticism at many of these same monasteries, and a high value placed on classical learning and publishing. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to Katok lamas and will examine how these prevailing institutional practices were incorporated into life at Katok. This examination will take the early years of the Katok reincarnate lama Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita Gyurmé Tsewang Chokdrup as a case study.

Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita's Early Years: Joining the Coterie of Trülkus and Training in the Treasures

Eighteenth-century Katok Monastery was influenced by, and participated in, the broader Nyingma and Degé trends introduced earlier in this chapter. However, the institutional changes that took place at Katok during this time were also conditioned by much more local issues. It is the complex tension between the regional and local dynamics that must be analyzed to understand fully the transformations at Katok. Foremost among the relevant local contexts is the incorporation of Longsel Nyingpo's treasures within Katok's liturgical and contemplative programs. In the following section I will discuss the momentous rise

of reincarnate lamas at Katok, and then detail Getsé's first thirty or so years at Katok during which he was trained by Zhingkyong and other reincarnated lamas there. I will also show that there was a strong shift towards a program centered on Treasures, especially Longsel's treasures. Furthermore the relatively modest Kama study and practice that did occur at Katok was based on recent compositions made by lamas from Mindrölling monastery, not texts from Katok's own literary patrimony. Overall my argument is that under the direction of the first generation of reincarnate lamas at Katok in the eighteenth century, the monastery was developing in such a way that reincarnate lamas and celibate monasticism were gaining ascendancy, while at the same time Longsel's treasures increasingly came to inhabit the center of Katok's religious programs. In contrast, there is no evidence of any systematic attempt to revive the Kama. Thus during this time the most distinctive traditions maintained at Katok were Longsel Nyingpo's treasures while the leadership was dominated by lamas who were said to be the reincarnations of Longsel Nyingpo's relatives and students. This is a far cry from the vision of Katok that Tsewang Norbu tried to enact at Katok.

The Rise of Reincarnated Lamas at Katok

Getsé Gyurmé Tséwang Chokdrup (1761-1829) was the most influential lama at Katok to follow Longsel Nyingpo. He proved himself to be a brilliant scholar and administrator, but his initial rise to prominence at Katok was entirely due to his status as a reincarnate lama. In fact, Getsé was part and parcel of an explosion of

reincarnate lamas at Katok. I argued earlier that Longsel Nyingpo profoundly altered the monastery’s administration when he introduced trülkus to Katok. As explained above, prior to Longsel's time at Katok the primary modes of succession among the leadership of the monastery were based on academic excellence and uncle-nephew heredity. Trülku succession seems to have been unknown. The first of this new generation of trülkus was Longsel 's son Sönam Deütsen (d. 1723), the reincarnation of Dündul Dorjé. Sönam Deütsen himself then identified further trülkus, foremost among them Tsewang Norbu. It appears, though, that it wasn't until the time of Sonam Deuten’s reincarnation that enduring trülku lines were established at Katok. By the 1760s there were at least four trülkus at Katok: Zhingkyong, Mokdrup (*rmog grub*), Chaktsa (*phyag tsha*), and Zhichen (*gzhi chen*). The first Zhingkyong was the first trülku at Katok to be truly powerful, and thus later histories claim that he discovered all the other principal Katok trülkus.

The Mokdrup trülkus line of reincarnate lamas began as the trülku of Orgyen Sampel (o rgyan bsam 'phel), a master in the Dündul Dorjé lineage of masters who was based at Moktsa Monastery.[299] This monastery is close to Katok, but across the Dri River in the present-day Tibetan Autonomous Region. The birth date of the first Moktsa, Namkha Chöwang (*nam mkha’ chos dbang*), is not known, but Getsé's *Autobiography* specifies his death as being in 1784.[300] Another important trülku line that originated during this same time period is the Chaktsa line. This line of

[299] Jamyang Gyeltsen, *Brief History of Katok*, 126.

[300] Getse Mahāpaṇḍita, *Autobiography*, 193.3.

incarnations stems from Bango Tsöndru Gyatso (sbra 'go btson 'grus rgya mtsho), a student of both Dündul and Longsel Nyingpo. The name Bango is the toponym of Tsöndru Gyatso's primary residence, a ridge two hours walk from Katok. The first and second Getsé also made it their primary Katok residence.[301] The fourth line of reincarnate lamas was the Zhichen line and began with Kunzang Tendzin (*gzhi chen bla ma kun bzang bstan 'dzin;* d. 1776) of Golok.[302] Getsé was trained by all four of these reincarnate lamas, who welcomed him into the expanding circle of Katok trülkus.[303]

One can imagine that other reincarnated lamas were also identified and promoted, but never matured into great lamas and thus subsequently were lost to history. Another trülku line that began under Zhingkyong – but was not established at Katok until during Getsé's tenure as head lama – was the Nyingön line.[304] They are said to be the incarnations of Longsel's teacher Sangyé Trashi, who was the lama at

[301] According to a contemporary oral tradition, Getsé's residence on Bango was destroyed in the aftermath of the murder of the second Getse by several monks who were ordered to assassinate him by his consort. The monks first killed Getsee and then also killed his consort and burnt down the home. The remains of the home are still visible.

[302] The first description Getsé gives of him in the *Autobiography* (169.6) is that "he was a great man, knowledgeable about both sciences [spiritual and worldly] and had a large entourage of monks and lay persons;" *gtsug lag gnyis/ mknyen pa'i skyes chen ser skya'i 'khor mang bcas.*

The current Mokdrup and Zhichen lamas are brothers. The former's name is Jikdrel Choklé Namgyel (*'jigs bral phyogs las rnam rgyal*) and the latter is the third Zhichen incarnation and named Pema Gyeltsen (*pad+ma rgyal mtshan*). The current Zhichen is also the father of the present head of the Drukpa Kagyü sect, the twelfth Drukchen, Jikmé Pema Wangchen (*'brug chen 'jigs med pad+ma dbang chen;* b. 1963).

[303] These four lamas are considered to be Katok lamas in that during their respective "first incarnations" they were deeply involved with the monastery (though not necessarily fulltime residents) and their incarnations have remained tied to Katok through to the present. Perhaps in their first incarnations they had dual allegiances but Katok lamas administered the recognitions of their later incarnations and representatives of the mother monastery trained them.

[304] Jamyang Gyeltsen, *Brief History of Katok*, 84-85.

Katok's Nyingön and taught Longsel during his first stay at the monastery in the 1640s. Several decades later Zhingkyong recognized an adult lama in Litang to be his reincarnation. This lama's reincarnation was discovered and then taken to Katok, where he was the first Nyingön trülku to be enthroned at Katok and work at the monastery.

Family and Recognition as a Trülku of Katok

Getsé's lasting legacy at the monastery was to reestablish the centrality of the Kama rituals and study, while at the same time enshrining the treasures of Longsel Nyingpo in the liturgical calendar and curriculum of Katok's meditation training centers. He also made an impact on Nyingma religion in Kham and Golok – reviving the study of the Guhyagarbha – through his extensive teaching tours and because he counted among his closest disciples leaders of many regional monasteries. Getsé is recognized throughout the Nyingma world as the compiler and editor of the most well-regarded and distributed edition of the Collected Tantras of the Ancients (*rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum*). Politically, he was a prominent chaplain in the Degé court from the late eighteenth century to his death in 1829. In this section I will first discuss his early years, with an eye to assessing the state of religious training at Katok under Zhingkyong.

The bare outline of Getsé's life is available in a few English language publications including translations of Nyingma histories and scholarly articles.[305] The scholarly articles, for one, do not make use of his recently published *Autobiography* and thus lack significant reference to Getsé's own self-representation. Here I will make exhaustive use of the *Autobiography* and the profile of him in *Guru Tashi's History*, which was composed the year before Getsé's death. The *Autobiography* was made available to the world only in 2001, along with the rest of his *Collected Works.*[306]

Getsé Gyurmé Tséwang Chokdrup was born in 1761 into the Getsé tribe of nomads. The Getsé tribe spent at least part of the year in the nomadic regions of northern Kardzé County and likely spent other periods in neighboring Serta County. Later in his life Getsé established a monastery nearby his tribe's grazing lands in what is now officially known as Getsé Township (*dge rtse shang;* Ch. *gengzhi xiang*),

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305 Achard, "Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang mchog grub (1761-1829) et la constitution du *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* de sDe dge," 43-47; Jigmé Lingpa, et. al., *Diety, Mantra, and Wisdom*, 17-18; and Duckworth, *Mipham On Buddha-nature*.

306 The great preserver and publisher of Nyingma texts Ja Tsering Gyatso (*bya tshe ring rgya mtsho*) of Nyakrong (and Katok monastery) sought out individual works from the *Collected Works* throughout eastern Tibet and with the help of American-based Tsadra Foundation published them at the turn of this century. An essentially complete set of the *Collected Works* were compiled and published as a facsimile edition. Many of the texts Tsering Gyatso procured are unclear in many places because of damage to the originals, smudged ink, or bleed through of both sides of a folio. These imperfections are amplified by the fact that this edition was printed on unbleached paper which diminishes the white-black contrast that is so helpful in distinguishing unclear letters and entire passages. Certain texts are also missing pages. Sometimes this is due the folia missing from the master copies but on other occasions individual sides are missing from the reprint and this is a mistake of the publisher. Those minor problems notwithstanding, Getsé's *Collected Works* are an outstanding source for the history of Katok and Nyingma thought in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Kardzé County.[307] In the *Autobiography* Getsé wrote about his father's eventful life: "He first entered the gate of the dharma [to become a monk]. Subsequently, because of the ravages of time (*dus 'gyur*) his (monastic) training became upended (*'chal*). He had clear and firm knowledge of the secular ways of man."[308] Getsé's father later encountered serious conflict within his camp and with Degé. The *Autobiography* continues on about his father's troubles, "First his brother became hostile (*dgrar langs*) and Degé descended with a large army and usurped the community and land. He experienced many sufferings, including imprisonment for many years."[309] Eventually he used he used his "skill in means" to call a meeting of the chiefs during which he regained his post and overcame all of his enemies. Getsé's mother – named Dokhoma (*rdo kho ma*) -was the daughter of the chief of the

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[307] In Getsé's own words (*Autobiography*, 164.2), "From among the smaller and larger Lurel *(klu ral*) in the east, I am from the latter; and from within its subdivisions into Dra and Da, my hometown is the former" (*shar sde'i klu ral che chung gnyis yod pas/ phyi ma de la gra zla gnyis zhes pa'i/ snga ma.* As Getsé was a nomad and these toponyms refer to campsites, it is hard to identify Dra with any certainty. The identification of his clan is more informative. The passage about their genealogy reads, "Now to explain the identity of my family line, in earlier times there were three (brothers?): Gélu, Gétse, and Géphen. Among the sons of Gélu, Wasi Kyab propagated the family line, and the five bands (*gzhung*) of Washul and others came about ([an interlinear notes lists out:] Trobo, Sangyékyap, Tsémgönkyap, Lamakyap, Yéru, Tönru, and others). I've heard that the Gepen circuit (*bskor*) are even in the lower Za (*mza smad*) region. As for the Getsé (*dge rtse*) lineage, the lineages known as Getsé have splintered into many (sublines). From among them are Trogyel's nine sons, including both Chaktargyel (*scags thar rgyal*) and Tamdrinyak (*rta mgrin yag*). The former lineage spawned the Upper Getsé (*dge rtse stod ma*) and from within the latter's lineage arose the seven camps (*shog*) of the Troshul. Monk Jinpa, Lhakyab Bum, Lhakyab Gyel, and Nyingpo arose (from the latter?). Lhakyapbum had the three (sons), Tubpa, Nyingpo, and Gyatso, and (another three) named Tsekyap Thar, Lozang Tenpa, and Namka Pelzang. From among those six the son of Nyingpo was my father, Losang Tsultrim" (*Getse's Autobiography*, 164.3).

[308] Ibid., 164.7; dang po chos sgor zhugs/ phyi nas dus 'gyur dbang gis bslab pa 'chal/ 'jig rten mi lugs blo gros gsal brtan no.

[309] Ibid., 165.3; thog mar phu nu dgrar langs sde dge yis/ dpung chen phab nas sde yul 'phrog dang/ kho rang brtson zhabs lo mang bcug pa sogs/ sdud bsngal mang po myong….

Chakmo clan of Golok (*lcags mo ‘gu log*).[310] His parents first gave birth to a girl, and then in the summer of the iron snake year of 1761 Getsé was born.[311] Four more daughters followed Getsé and his older sister and Getsé makes special mention that he was the only son.

Getsé devotes several lines in the *Autobiography* to telling the reader that when he was just a young boy he would play monk dress-up and was very ethical. His family members took notice and “at one point my paternal uncle asked, ‘Who are you?’ I replied, ‘I am Tsewang Trinlé (*tshe dbang phrin las*).”[312] Tsewang Trinlé was a nephew of Longsel Nyingpo and managed Katok after the death of Longsel’s son Sönam Deütsen in 1723.[313] The *Autobiography* says that when his parents heard that their only son had memories of his past life as a lama they immediately knew he was a trülku and lamented the fact due to fears of losing their son to a monastery as well as possible political consequences that might result from losing their heir. The first lama to recognize the child as a trülku was Dzokchen Wön lama Padma Kundröl Namgyel (*rdzogs chen dbon pad+ma kun grol rnam rgyal*), who visited Getsé’s area when the boy was about 6 or 7 years old. Getsé writes,[314]

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[310] Ibid., 165.6

[311] Ibid.

[312] Ibid., 166.2; skabs shig khu bos khyod su yin zhes par/ tshe dbang phrin las yin zhes smras par 'dug.

[313] Ngawang Lodrö, *Guru Trashi's History*, 754.

[314] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Autobiography, 166.4; khrom dbang gnang sar bdag kyang pha yis khrid/ zhal mjal skal bzang thob cing dbang de'i tshe/ bdag nyid kho nar spyan gyis mi g.yo gzigs/ phyir nyin rnam 'joms byabs khrus bka' drin bstal/ 'di ni nges par kaH thog bstan pa la/ phan 'gyur khyim du ma sdod der song zhes.

> My father led me to where (Padma Kundröl Namgyel) was giving a public initiation and I had the good fortune to behold his face. During that initiation he looked only at me. The next day he kindly bestowed the Vidāraṇa cleansing ritual. He said, 'Certainly this one will benefit the teachings of Katok. He should not live at home. He should go there (Katok monastery).'

The two leaders of Katok at that time – Drimé Zhingkyong and Mokdrup – were then consulted. Mokdrup Namkha Chöwang (*rmog grub nam mkha' chos dbang,* d. 1784) had a vision indicating that the young son of the leader of the Getsé tribe was the reincarnation of Tsewang Trinlé and formalized th e recognition. Furthermore, Drimé Zhingkyong and Mokdrup jointly named the boy Rindzin Mingyur Yeshé (*rig 'dzin mi 'gyur ye shes*).[315]

The lamas also said that if the boy did not visit Katok that very year then disturbances (*'tshub cha che*) would be visited on the family.[316] Getsé's father was worried about this threat and took his son to Katok in 1767, when Getsé was seven years old. Getsé mentions in his *Autobiography* that as they climbed the mountain on their final approach to Katok they were in a dark forest until they reached Kumbum Ringmo, where the sun finally became visible. Zhingkyong was in a nine-year retreat

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[315] Ibid., 167.1.

[316] Ibid., 167.2; lo der cis kyang shog gsung ma 'ong na/ 'tshub cha che gsung.

at the time of the visit and Getsé did not meet him.[317] Mokdrup Namkha Chöwang was available and reconfirmed Getsé's identity as a reincarnate lama of Katok.

Getsé and his father left Katok in the early winter of 1767 and traveled to Dzokchen Monastery on their way back home. At Dzokchen Getsé was received by Dzokchen Wön lama Padma Kundröl Namgyel (*pad+ma kun grol rnam rgyal*). Friendly relations with the lamas of Dzokchen Monastery were a constant for Getsé, as they had been for Zhingkyong, Sönam Deütsen, and Longsel before him. Soon afterwards Getsé met two more of the new coterie of trülkus at Katok. The first was Zhichen lama Kunzang Tendzin (*gzhi chen bla ma kun bzang bstan 'dzin;* d. 1776). The Zhichen lamas of Katok continue to be significant figures in the broader Katok milieu. Zhichen lama cut Getsé's hair, bestowed on him the vows of refuge, and gave him the name Gyurmé Tsewang Chokdrup, which became his primary name.[318] Zhichen also gave Getsé the reading transmission for Longsel Nyingpo's treasures. Zhichen did not bestow on Getsé the initiations because he had to rush to a retreat. The Chaktsa trülku also came to see the child.

In 1769 Getsé's father went to see the king of Degé (or perhaps his representatives) in Horkhok (*hor khog*). The point of the meeting was to hand over Getsé to the government and Katok. His father did not want to lose his only son to the monastery (*kaH thog btang bar ma 'dod*) and was worried that doing so would

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[317] Ibid., 167.6; de skabs lo dgu'i bcad rgyas zhal blta ba'i/ skabs ma rnyed.

[318] Ibid., 170.1.

involve surrendering (*mgo btags*) his community to Degé.[319] In a manner of speaking, the recognition of the Getsé trülku functioned analogously like a marriage alliance between Dege and the previously restive Getse t ribe. The father's apprehensions were overpowered by the coercive pressure put on him by both the Mazur sub-state of Trehor and Degé. After the father gave his word that he would send Getsé to Katok, the father and son team returned home and then Getsé quickly set off for his new home and family: Katok monastery. The monastery was his new household that he was to inherit and look after, and the four reincarnate lamas mentioned above became his father figures and mentors.

The First Phase of Getsé's Training and Career

Getsé's education and training, and eventual career as a high lama of Katok, can be seen to have two major phases. The first phase spans from his childhood to the death of his master Zhingkyong in 1786, when Getsé was twenty-six years old. During this formative part of his life, Getsé's training in ritual and contemplation was centered on Longsel's treasures and the treasure cycles of earlier Nyingma lamas. This phase of his career does not attest to a strong emphasis on Kama liturgies or studies. The second phase of his career, by contrast, sees Getsé devoting his considerable institutional resources towards reviving the Kama and establishing a balance between the Kama and Treasure traditions at Katok. In this section we will

[319] Ibid., 170.7.

examine the first phase of Getsé's life, to be followed in the next chapter with an examination of the second phase.

Getsé was brought to Katok at age seven and enthroned as the reincarnation of Tsewang Trinlé. His main teachers were four of the most prominent reincarnate lamas of Katok, and all of them were in their first generations of their trülku lines. Getsé's education in rituals, meditation, and tantra began at age twelve. In 1772 Chaktsa trülku gave him the reading transmission for nine volumes of an *Eight Transmitted Precepts* (*bka' brgyad*) cycle of treasures. Chaktsa also taught Getsé the strenuous subtle body yogic practices (*rtsa rlung*) from Dündül Dorjé's treasures. Getsé says he mastered the practice of heat yoga in just one month of training. That same year Mokdrup trülku gave him the reading transmissions for Nyangrel's *Eight Transmitted Precepts* cycle called the *Gathering of the Sugatas* (*bder 'dus*) liturgies and all thirteen volumes of the *Gathering of the Guru's Intention* (*bla ma dgongs 'dus*).

Early in 1772 Getsé joined a delegation of Katok lamas on a trip to Pelpung to meet the thirteenth Karmapa Dündül Dorjé (*bdud 'dul rdo rje*; 1734-1798).[320] Both Getsé and Situ report on the same points: the large size of the Katok contingent, and Karmapa and Situ's performance of the hat ceremonies, and their bestowal of initiations to the Katok group.[321] Getsé mentions he met with Situ in his private

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[320] Ibid., 174.2. Getsé says that he was chosen to go because Zhingkyong was in retreat, presumably the nine-year retreat he was in when Getsé first visited the monastery in 1767; *rje nyid bcad rgya'i stabs/ bdag nyid mngags.*

[321] Compare Ibid., 174.2-175.1 and Situ Paṇchen, *Autobiography,* 682.4-682.5.

quarters where they had a discussion. In fact, Situ already knew of Getsé because he determined the date of Getsé's enthronement over a dozen years before.[322] The young lama must have made a very positive impression on Situ, because in the latter's account of the visit Getsé is the first Katok lama named, followed by the much more senior Mokdrup.[323] Getsé also had an inspiring friendship with Belo Tsewang Kunkhyab (*'be lo tshe dbang kun khyab*), Situ Penchen's great student and biographer. He writes that Belo visited him several times during his stay at Pelpung. Later that year Getsé visited Dzokchen monastery and wrote glowing things about the lamas there. Towards the end of the year Chaktsa gave Getsé another enthronement.[324]

The following year, 1773, Getsé reunited with Zhichen Kunzang Tendzin, who he met years before when still a child and living with his parents. Zhichen seems to have been the most learned of the Katok trülkus and Getsé began a short but formative tutorial under him. This lama taught the young Getsé many important treasure-based liturgies and contemplations, in addition to Mahāmūdra and the stories of the Buddha's previous lives (*avadana*).[325]

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[322] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Autobiography*, 171.5.

[323] Situ Peṇchen, *Autobiography*, 682.4.

[324] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Autobiography*, 177.3.

[325] The texts Kunzang Tendzin taught Getsé included *Guidance on Mahāmūdra and Great Perfection* (khrid yig phyag rdzogs; author unknown), Yeshé Gyeltsen's Ocean of Esoteric Instructions, the Recitation Manual for the Eight Transmitted Precepts (*bka' brgyad bsnyen yig*) by Lochen Dharmaśri, and Aryasura's tales of the previous lives of the Buddhas and the third Karmapa's retelling.

In 1774, following a nine-year retreat, Zhingkyong gave the initiation for one of the central Kama tantras, the *Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions* (*mdo dbang*) to Getsé.[326] Zhingkyong also gave him the reading transmission for Lochen Dharmashri's *General Exposition of the Sūtra Initiation* (*mdo dbang spyi don*). Additionally, Zhingkyong gave Getsé the reading transmission for an important sub-commentary of the Guhyagarbha; namely, Ranjam Orgyen Chödrak's (b. 1676) *General Exposition of Lochen Dharmaśri's Ornament of the Lord of Secrets' Intention*. Zhingkyong told Getsé that he should memorize the text because later he would have to teach the Guhyagarbha to many assemblies. Getsé quickly memorized it, and did indeed teach it to many students over the course of his life. Notice that Zhingkyong did not teach him the text, he only gave the reading transmission. Although Getsé's hagiography of Zhingkyong in the inventory of his reliquary stūpa says that he was a scholar of these texts,[327] here and in the record of the next year we see that Zhingkyong only transmitted the texts to Getsé but did not teach them at Katok.

While still only fourteen years old, Getsé gave instructions on the practice of Longsel's treasures (*klong gsal khrid*) to monks in Golok.[328] This was the first of a lifetime of teachings on Longsel's treasures that Getsé would give throughout Kham and Golok. The next year, 1775, Zhingkyong gave many more reading transmissions

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[326] Zhingkyong's long retreat ended the preceding year; Ibid., 177.1.

[327] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Inventory of Zhingkyong's Reliquary*, 110.7-114.1.

[328] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Autobiography*, 179.5.

to Getsé, including those for Ngari Paṇchen's *Three Vows* (root text and commentary), Dündül Dorjé's *Triad of Peaceful and Wrathful deities and Kilaya* (*zhi khro phur gsum*), Longsel's *Further Heart of Great Compassionate One (thugs chen yang snying*), and the Minling liturgical collection *Excellent Vase of Wish-fulfillment 'dod 'jo bum bzang*).

Also in 1775 Getsé received sustained instruction on the *Guhyagarbha* for the first time. Zhichen Kunzang Tendzin taught Getsé the *content* of Lochen Dharmaśri's *Ornament of the Lord of Secret's Intention*, the shorter of Lochen's two commentaries on the Guhyagarbha. Note too that the recently composed Minling treatises are circulating at Katok, not commentaries written by past Katok masters. In fact, years later Getsé wrote a supplication to the lamas of the *Guhyagarbha* instruction lineage which confirms that the lineage transmitted to him stemmed from Mindrölling Monastery rather than being the original Katok lineage.[329] This leads me to assume that the Katok Guhyagarbha instruction lineage had been completely severed during the post-Longsel period.

Getsé's teaching career intensified in 1775 when he taught his first hundred-day training session on Longsel's treasures. In the fall of that year, the fifteen-year-old Getsé went home to see his family and go on an alms round for dairy products (*dkar sdom*). While there he gave initiations and reading transmissions to the entire corpus of Longsel's treasures to the local lamas and monks. Getsé then led a hundred-day winter training session (*dgun bca'*) in Sangshar Valley (*gsang shar mda'*) in

[329] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Supplication to the Lineage of the Secret Nucleus.

Dralak (*grwa lag*).[330] Getsé would continue to intermittently lead these for the rest of his life in different places in Kham. During this first hundred-day session he instructed the monks in the preliminaries and the yogas of winds and channels on the basis of Longsel's treasures. Getsé states that the study period, four daily sessions of practice, offerings on the twenty-ninth day of the last lunar month of the year (*dgu gtor*), and other facets, were conducted according to the tradition maintained in Katok.

The first thing Gesté says in his account of 1776 is that the repair of Kumbum Ringmo was finally underway, the most derelict of the two temples that Tsewang Norbu complained about in his letters charging Zhingkyong with serious neglect of Katok. Gesté doesn't name the agent behind the repairs but he uses the honorific form of the verb to describe the event (*sku 'bum ring mo zhig gso mdzad*), thereby giving credit to one of his lamas for the repairs.[331] The repairs took several years. In the fall of 1776 Getsé received the sad news that his teacher Zhichen trülku Kunzang Tenzin – the only lama to actually teach him the doctrines of the *Guhyagarbha* – died while on the way back from Lhasa.[332]

That winter Getsé received from Chaktsa more initiations and reading transmissions of Dündül's treasures, as well as further teachings on Longsel's subtle

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[330] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Autobiography*, 181.2. Dralak, which is also spelled *grwa legs*, is in the abovementioned Getsé Township, Trehor District, Kardzé County, Sichuan.

[331] In an early passage in the record for 1774 (Ibid., 179.6) Getsé says that he donated all his grain alms from that year to the renovation of Kumbum Ringmo, thus he was directly involved in the renovation.

[332] Ibid., 182.5.

body yogas. The following year, 1777, when Getsé was seventeen years old, he received many more reading transmissions of major treasure cycles from Zhingkyong. He also studied poetry and the literary arts for much of the year under Mokdrup. Getsé recounts that Situ Penchen – the doyen of classical studies in Degé – ordered Mokdrup to arrange for the young Getsé to get a good education in the literary arts (*sgra*) and Mokdrup didn't want to disregard this master's order.[333] Getsé went on to study the literary arts under several different masters and later became a sought after teacher and author of treatises on the literary arts. The final volume of his *Collected Works* contains his nearly 300 folia -side-long commentary on the *Kalāpasūtra* Sanskrit grammar.

This year Getsé also studied the rites involved in the Great Tenth Day Festival (*tshes bcu chen mo*).[334] Getsé would later institute this festival as an annua l occurrence at Katok, with the initial funding coming from the Degé royal court. Getsé was busy with rituals, ceremonies, and teaching his own students for all of 1778, and does not record studying under his teachers that year. The biggest event of the year at Katok was the grand opening ceremony of the newly renovated Kumbum Ringmo. The year before Getsé composed an inventory (*dkar chag*) of the newly renovated temple and it was painted by the side of the main door.[335]

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[333] Ibid., 184.3.

[334] Ibid., 183.2. Getsé studied the Tsé tradition (*rtse lugs*) of the Great Tenth Day liturgies under a lama from Dorjédrak Monastery.

[335] I have not been able to locate a transcript of this inventory in the extant version of Getsé's *Collected Works*.

Getsé went back to his home region in the fall. His father told him to return to Dralak to teach. This was a turning point in his life, because the next year he would found a monastery in Dralak that would be his second home base for the rest of his life.[336] At Dralak Getsé presided over another long training session. He says this training session was just like the other one, and therefore probably lasted one hundred days and was centered on Longsel's treasures. The next spring, in 1779, Zhingkyong visited Dralak and declared the site to indeed be Getsé's home base (*ste gnas*).[337] Dralak Monastery was promptly built and Getsé proclaimed that founding a monastery there fulfilled the wishes of every one in Getse, Serta, Do, and Golok (*ge gser rdo dang 'gu log yul kun*).[338] Getsé gave the monks of his new monastery the reading transmission of the Vinaya before returning to Katok at the onset of winter.

In 1780 Getsé, now aged 20, made his first trip to southern Kham, down to Lithang and Bathang. From this point on Getsé traveled to southern Kham every few years, signifying that it was a major venue for his fundraising and teaching activities. On this first trip he went to attend the funeral of the chief of Shaksar (*gzhag gsar*) in Lithang. Longsel Nyingpo, of course, was from this area and taught at Shaksar.[339]

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[336] Ibid., 185.4. Nevertheless the move to Dralak began against the backdrop of tensions between the locals and Mokdrup and Getsé says the local people were initially unwelcoming to him. Getsé does not divulge any details about the conflict between the two parties, yet he implies that a resolution was reached this year.

[337] Ibid., 185.6.

[338] Cf., *History of the Monasteries of Kardzé Prefecture*, v. 1, 122-130, for a recent historical profile of Dralak Monastery.

[339] Getsé remained connected to Shak for his entire life, traveling there again and again over the years. His *Collected Works* also contains a few works composed for the leaders of Shak. For instance, *Inventory to a Collection of Precious Scriptures* (*gsung rab rin po che'i dkar chag thar pa'i dga' ston;* vol. 9, pp. 31-40).

During this trip Getsé visited several Longsel treasures sites. In the first months of the next year, 1781, Getsé led a 100-day training session at Dechen Monastery in Batang. Getsé describes the event as follows, "While staying at Dechen Monastery for 100 days I trained the assembly of lamas and monks in the mūdras and recitation (*'don bsgrigs*) of the Three Buddha Bodies ritual, as well as giving them the initiations, reading transmissions, and instructions of the Longsel dharma cycles."[340] Getsé returned to Katok before the end of the year.

This year, 1781, marks the beginning of Getsé's closer relations with the royal court. Zhingkyong was asked to preside over an elaborate ceremony in which blessed pills are produced and consecrated (Mani Bumdrup; *ma Ni bum sgrub*) at the Changra palace (*lcang ra pho brang*). The chief royal involved was the prince Sawang Zangpo (*sad bang bzang po*). Two years later Getsé would attend this crown prince's marriage and act as one of the chief chaplains to he and his wife. His bride Tsewang Lhamo – daughter of the chief of Garjé, in far southern Degé – became a stalwart supporter of Nyingma lamas in Degé and one of Getsé's chief sponsors.

In 1783 Getsé traveled widely through Nyakrong (*nyag rong*), where there are many Katok bran ch monasteries. In 1784 Zhingkyong received a letter from the Qingwang (Tib. *ching wam*; 親王) Sönam Dorjé (*bsod nams rdo rje*).[341] A chingwang

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[340] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Autobiography, 188.5; bde chen dgon/ zhag brgya bsdad nas bla gra 'dus tshogs la/ klong gsal chos skor dbang lung khrid bcas sogs/ sku gsum cho ga'i phyag rgya 'don bsgrigs bslabs. The Three Buddha Bodies Ritual belongs to Longsel Nyingpo's primary cycle of treasures, the Innermost Spirituality of Indestructible Radiant Space (Longsel Dorjé Nyingpo; klong gsal rdo rje snying po). The key text of the Three Buddha Bodies Ritual is the sku gsum zhi khro'i cho ga bla med snying po (found in Volume One of his Collected Treasures).

[341] It is unclear why Getsé writes this word as chingwam, with an m suffix.

was the highest rank of Mongolian nobility and means king or prince of the first order. The *Annals of Kokonor* was completed in 1786, and puts Sönam Dorjé at the head of its list of the leaders of the Banner of the Left Side of the Ma River (*rma chu*).[342] This attests to the Oirat Mongols' ongoing patronage of Nyingma lamas, beginning with Longsel's patron Khandro.[343] The Qingwang was a title given to princely descendents of Guśri Khan who were leaders of tribes a round Lake Kokonor. Sönam Dorjé was the Chingwam of the left side of the Machu River. Mokdrup Rinpoche died at the end of 1785. The first Mokdrup established himself at Katok sufficiently such that his reincarnation would inherit the high status of the first Mokdrup at the monastery. Getse's recognition and training of the second Mokdrup will be covered in the following chapter.

In 1785 Getsé traveled to Tromthog (*khrom thog*) and met generous patrons. They gave him money to use as a trust (*thebs*) to finance the annual Tenth Day Festivals. Getsé says that this money complemented the money he raised "on foot" (*rkang 'gros thebs sbyar*) and was enough to institute an annual festival.[344] Later this year another letter and delegation of officials and monks from the Qingwang Sönam Dorjé arrived and they invited Getsé to "Mongolia" (*sog yul*), i.e. Mongolian inhabited areas of northeastern Tibet. Zhingkyong ordered him to go, probably in his

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[342] Yang, Annals of Kokonor, 53.

[343] Of course it was reported that Khandro was assassinated because of his conversion to Nyingma lamas but as we can see with later Oirat involvement with Dzokchen and now Katok lamas, this sectarian excuse is not very convincing.

[344] Ibid., 193.4.

place. Getsé went to Amdo with them and spent over one year touring monasteries and nomad communities in Qinghai and Gansu.[345] An account of his trip deserves a detailed study elsewhere.

In 1786 he concluded his trip to Mongolia and Amdo and returned to Dralak. While there, Zhingkyong passed away in the eleventh lunar month of the year. In his *Autobiography* Getsé emphasizes that lamas from all the regional Nyingma and Kagyü monasteries sent their condolences. At the beginning of the next year, 1787, Getsé left for Central Trip where he made offerings at all the important temples in order to raise merit for Zhingkyong (*dgongs rdzogs*). Thus in the space of three years the two main lamas of Katok – Zhingkyong and Mokdrup – passed, leaving the twenty-six-year old Getsé in charge of the monastery. We will see in the next chapter that he used this newfound power, and status as senior reincarnate lama at a very young age, to institute a far-reaching change to Katok.

The preceding discussion of Getsé has ignored one central topic of the chapter, monasticism. In other words, was Getsé a monk? Did he follow his teacher Zhingkyong and take up celibate monasticism? For some reason Getsé does not recount in his *Autobiography* any ordinations (novice nor full) that he might have undergone during his life, nor does he ever mention giving any ordinations. The work is written in verse and omits many of the quotidian details that are found in great quantities in diary-format autobiographies such as Situ Penchen's. However, one's ordinations are major life cycle rituals that a contemporary reader would not

[345] Ibid., 193.7-198.2.

expect to be omitted, and yet Getsé never mentions any. Relying solely on the *Autobiography* one might conclude that Getsé did not follow his lama Zhingkyong and become an ordained monk. The colophons of Getsé's writings, though, supplement the self -representation found in the *Autobiography* and indicate that Getse was indeed involved in the monastic revival movement in eighteenth century Degé. Getsé refers to himself as a monk on several occasions in the colophons to the titles in his *Collected Works*. For inst ance, in the *Notes on the Explanation of the General Exposition of the Guhyagarbha* Getsé signs off by calling himself a lazy monk (*ban+de snyom las pa; bhante*).[346] In another text he signs off as a "monk of the Degénerate age" (*snyigs dus kyi ban+de; bhante*)[347] Getsé's most well circulated composition is certainly his *Index* to the Degé edition of the *Collected Tantras of the Nyingmapa*, which he edited. In the colophon of this work Getsé identifies himself as "the lowliest of the subjects of the dharma lord of Katok, the Shakya monk (*shakya'i btsun pa*; *bhadanta*) Gyurmé Tsewang Chokdrup."[348] It remains a conundrum why Getsé did not record the occasion of his ordination(s) in his *Autobiography*, but it is clear from passages such as these that in important texts Getsé presented himself as a monk.

Up until this point in Getsé's *Autobiography* he represents himself as receiving a training dominated by Longsel and Dundül's treasures, and also

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[346] p. 397.6.

[347] Extoling the Deeds of the Buddha (thub pa'i mdzad par bsngags pa dad pa'i me tog), 13.2

[348] Index to the Collected Tantras of the Nyingmapa, 393.1. chos kyi rje kaH thog pa'i 'bangs kyi tha shal du gyur pa shakya'i btsun pa 'gyur med tshe dbang mchog grub.

influenced to some degree by recent developments at Mindrölling Monastery. Zhingkyong, Mokdrup, Chaktsa, and Zhichen welcomed the young Getsé into the growing circle of reincarnate lamas at Katok, and with only one notable exception train him in a way that diverges sharply from the earlier curricula at Katok. Getsé quickly mastered the practices of the Katok treasures and taught them around Kham at numerous one hundred-day teaching sessions. Furthermore, we see that the earlier academic tradition of Katok had been nearly severed. Getsé makes no mention of receiving teachings or reading transmissions of any of the earlier Katok classics. Rather his brief studies of Kama topics were transmitted through the Mindrölling tradition (i.e., the *General Exposition of the Sūtra Initiation* and the *Guhyagarbha* commentaries). This training can be characterized as quite different from the study program that flourished for centuries earlier in Katok's history. The next chapters examines how after Getse became the senior lama at Katok, he did a startling about face and began a new initiative to reinstate the full panoply of Kama rituals and studies, in marked contrast to the culture into which his own teachers initiated him.

Conclusion

This sketch of religion in Degé in the middle to late eighteenth century allows for several conclusions about core featur es and emerging trends at the larger Nyingma monasteries in the region. For one, we see that the royal court and the heads of the major monasteries maintained close relations over the generations. This suggests that the growth of the kingdom and monasterie s progressed in mutually

advantageous ways, such as with the rise of state-overseen reincarnate lamas. Getse's recognition – in which the son of a chieftain of a troublesome tribe on the fringes of the kingdom is identified as a lama of a royal monastery – is a good example of collaboration between state and monastery in the furthering and administration of the trülku tradition in Degé. The ascendancy of reincarnate lamas at Katok had a profound impact on the internal dynamics of the monastery as well. Although Tsewang Norbu complained bitterly in the 1750s about the trülku upstarts at Katok, by that time it was already a *fait accompli*. The reincarnated lamas maintained their power generation after generation, through to the present, thereby permanently transforming the office and succession of the monastery's leadership.

This chapter also shows that celibate monasticism was an emerging trend at the local Nyingma monasteries, but unevenly distributed. We saw that certain segments of Katok and Pelyül participated in Situ's numerous ordination ceremonies. Because of the fragmentary historical record, we simply do not know exactly how many of the residents at Katok were ordained monks. It is known, though, that head lamas such as Zhingkyong and Getsé were monks. In fact contemporary Katok lamas claim that the current ordination lineage of Katok is that very lineage stemming from Zhingkyong and presumably passing through Getsé. We also see that some of the Kama liturgies for which Katok was originally well known – especially the initiation of the *Sūtra That Gathers All Intentions* – were still actively maintained. Yet it is apparent from Getsé's account of his training that the earlier scholastic traditions of

study were in serious decline, as Getsé does not mention being taught a single treatise composed by any of pre- Longsel Katok scholars.

On balance, Katok in the later eighteenth century was a vibrant monastery. Despite the criticisms and machinations of Tsewang Norbu, the reincarnate lamas at Katok's helm had not ruined the monastery. Rather, this was a period of growth and change. The following chapter will show how the mature Getse made certain targeted changes to the new Katok, while maintaining most of the traditions he inherited from Zhingkyong and others. After the death of his teachers, Getsé had a certain awakening about the sorry state of the Kama at Katok and resolved to revive the Kama mandalas and study. An interesting facet of Getse's campaign is that he reintroduced the Kama in a non-oppositional manner, finding a balance between the roles of the treasures and Kama in the overall ritual, contemplative, and academic programs at Katok.

Chapter Four: The Revival of the Kama and Codification of Longsel Nyingpo's Treaures at Katok

The preceding chapter covered Getsé's training and early teaching career. This period in his life was characterized by an overriding involvement with Longsel Nyingpo's treasures, with the Kama having a lesser role in Getsé's studies and teaching. During Getsé's mature period – the 1790s to his death in 1829 – he deepened his engagments with both Longsel's terma and the Kama, and had a profound impact on both and Katok Monastery. At middle age Getsé led a radical transformation of Katok that was to have a longterm impact on the future of the institution. This chapter examines three of his main innovations during this time. Firstly, Getsé revived the ritual practice and tantric exegesis of the Kama after more than a century of dormancy. This revival was driven by the invitation of teachers from Mindroling to transmit their distinctive initiations and ritual expertise to the monks at Katok and by Getsé's own repeated teaching of the Mindroling commentaries on the core Guhyagarbha tantra. Secondly, Getsé wrote liturgies and instructional manuals for strategically chosen treasures of Longsel, which he then established as prominent features in Katok's ritual and contemplative programs. The third section of this chapter explores how Getsé made Katok the premiere center for the study of the Kama in Degé.

Getsé's Revival of Kama Rituals and Tantric Exegesis

In the early 1790s Getsé made the practice and study of the Kama a central feature of the liturgical and scholastic programs at Katok after a century of their historical eclipse in Kham by the resurgent treasure traditions. This renaissance of the Kama was initiated in 1791 with Getsé and the third Dzokchen Rinpoché jointly inviting lamas from Mindroling Monastery to Degé to transmit Kama rituals and doctrine to the local Nyingma monks. Getsé's aim was not to turn the tables and begin to promote the Kama at the expense of the treasures but instead to integrate the Kama and treasure traditions within the institutional fabric of Katok. Interestingly, Getsé chose to not revive Katok's own renowned Kama heritage, but rather focused on the Central Tibetan Kama traditions of Mindröling. In fact, Getsé's *Autobiography* and writings on the Kama indicate he was not interested in the Katok Kama per se. His interest was in the Kama itself without any concern for Katok's distinct transmissions of it. This section analyzes the initial events of the revival as represented in the *Autobiography* and then look at Getsé's efforts to spread the teachings at Katok and its branch monasteries through preaching and composition.

One factor that might have been important in providing Getsé with the intellectual and administrative freedom to attempt this bold move was the recent passing of his teachers. Mokdrup died in 1784 and Zhingkyong passed away in 1786. The year after Zhingkyong's death, 1787, Getsé traveled to Ütsang to perform merit-making activities on behalf of his master. This was Getsé's first and only trip to

Central Tibet and along the way he met with Jikmé Lingpa (1729 -1798), the single most influential treasure revealer of the late-eighteenth century.[349] Getsé only spent two days with Jikmé Lingpa but during that time the treasure revealer initiated Getsé into all of his treasures, including the famed cycle of Dzokchen treasures called the *Innermost Spirituality of the Great Expanse* (*Longchen Nyingtik; klong chen snying thig*). Despite being an accomplished tertön, Jikmé Lingpa devoted much time to compiling a collection of the *Collected Tantras of the Nyingmapa*, the scriptural arm of the Kama. Dudjom Rinpoché describes his efforts,[350]

> Above all , during that age the teaching of the Ancient Translation School had everywhere become sparse. …He had copies made, using the finest supplies and materials, of all the pecious tantras of the Nyingmapa tradition which were to be found at Mindröling, some twenty-five volumes… Previously there had been neither a detailed catalogue, nor a verified history, compiled on this topic, but, because his brilliance was profound and vast in connection with the three logical axioms, this venerable master composed the Narrative History

[349] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Autobiography*, 204.2. For more on his life see Gyatso, *Apparitions of the Self* and Dudjim Rinpoche, *Nyingma School of Tibetan Budhism*, 835-840. Traditional biographies of Jikmé Lingpa are found in Dudjom Rinpoche, *Nyingma School of Buddhism*, and (in Tibetan) Jikmé Lingpa, *Autobiographies*. The latter contains a number of biographical writings, including his long outer autobiography and secret biographies.

[350] *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, 838-839. For more on this Jikmé Lingpa's catalog and its influence on Getsé, see Achard, "La liste des Tantras du *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* selon l'édition établie par Kun mkhyen 'Jigs med gling pa" and "Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang mchog grub (1761-1829) et la constitution du *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* de sDe dge."

> of the *Precious Collected Tantras of the Ancient Translation School, the Ornament Covering all Jambudvīpa*.

I argue that Getsé's emerging resolve to revive the Kama was deeply inspired by his meetind with Jikmé Lingpa. Years Later when Getsé edited the Degé edition of the *Collected Tantras of the Nyingmapa* his primary source of texts and model of arrangement was Jikmé Lingpa's manuscript edition mentioned above.[351]

Getsé would later be a close collaborator of this lama's main student Do Drupchen (*rdo grub chen*; 1745-1821), and would be a key teacher of Jigmé Lingpa's own reincarnation Do Khyentsé Yeshé Dorjé (*mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje*). Getsé wanted to also visit Mindroling Monastery but was prevented from doing so due to an epidemic in th e area. He returned to Katok late in 1788 after a journey taking more than a year.

The spring after his return from Central Tibet Getsé became close with the third Dzokchen Rinpoché Ati Tenpé Gyeltsen (*a ti bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan*, d. 1792) his eventual partner in the campaign to revive the Kama in Kham. In the account of their meeting at the annual "consecration of the ritual vase" (bumdrup; *bum sgrub*) ceremony at the Changra palace in Degé, Getsé says they had a heart -to-heart meeting (*zhib mjal*).[352] Later that year at another gathering of lamas called by Degé, the third Dzokchen Rinpoché was "not steady on his feet" (*zhabs pad ma brtan*) and

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[351] Achard, "Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang mchog grub (1761-1829) et la constitution du *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* de sDe dge," 43; "L'une des éditions les plus importantes fut la première version xylographique (en 26 volumes) basée sur le catalogue de 'Jigs med gling pa…"

[352] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Autobiography*, 213.4.

Getsé had to perform certain ritual dances in his place.[353] The following year, 1790, king Sawang Zangpo died while still in his early twenties.[354] All the court chaplains in Degé – including Getsé and the third Dzokchen Rinpoché – were consumed with the funeral services for almost the entire year. These two important Nyingma reincarnate lamas of nearly the same age would have had many opportunities that year to exchange views, though because of decorum Getsé does not mention in his *Autobiography* any socializing that may have taken place during the funeral services. Getsé and the Dzokchen lama met again at the annual bumdrup ceremony in 1791 and had very intense discussions (*gsung mchid zhib gnang*).[355]

In 1791 Getsé and Dzokchen Rinpoché went beyond mere conversation to launch a practical agenda in regards to their respective monasteries and shared Nyingma sect. This year they set in motion a momentous transformation at their respective monasteries by systematically reestablishing the Kama. The revival of the Kama was accomplished by inviting key teachers from Mindroling who had the requisite transmissions and were expert in the rituals and doctrines. Getsé gives all the credit for this to Dzokchen Rinpoché but Getsé is simply being humble.[356] For one, humility in Tibetan autobiographical writing is the norm. Furthermore we have

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[353] Ibid., 214.1.

[354] The previous year Sawang Zangpo seemed to be well. Getsé recounts in the *Autobiography* (213.6) that in the summer of 1789 the royal family came to Katok to celebrate the Tenth Day Festival. Getsé remarks that the young king, whose wedding he attended several years before, came dressed in the outfit of a lay tantric practitioner (*sngags 'changs*).

[355] Ibid., 216.5.

[356] Ibid., 216.6.

seen that in the year leading up to the arrival of the Mindroling lamas, Getsé and Dzokchen Rinpoché met several times and held intense discussions. Regardless of whether the initial planning to invite the Mindroling lamas was the work of Dzokchen Rinpoché, Getsé was a firm supporter and central partner in the overall process. And as we will see, Getsé certainly took full advantage of the visiting teachers and spread their teachings to Katok. The first mention of the Kama revival in the *Autobiography* states,[357]

> Dzokchen Rinpoché generated concern for the Nyingma teachings. In order to establish the accomplishment and offering ceremonies of the thirteen maṇḍalas of the amazing *Sūtra*, *Magical Net,* and so on, intelligent lamas and teachers of the maṇḍalas, drawing, measuring, operas, melodies, dances, and mūdras came (to Degé) from Akaniṣṭa Mindrölling (in 1791).

The thirteen maṇḍalas comprise a collection of the principal deities of the Kama that were codified in the context of Anuyoga ritual developments.[358] The vast majority of the maṇḍalas derive from Mahayoga tantras, but the organizing principle

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[357] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Autobiography, 216.6; rdzogs chen rin po ches/ snga 'gyur bstan la thugs bskyed rmad byung gi/ mdo sgyu la sogs dkyil 'khor bcu gsum gyi/ sgrub mchod tshug par 'og smin gling nas/ dkyil 'khor bri thig 'cham dbyangs gar phyag rgya'i/ slob dpon bla ma slo ldan phebs 'dug pas...

[358] See Dalton, *The Uses of the* Dgongs Pa 'Dus Pa'i Mdo *in the Development of the Rnying-Ma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, Appendix VI, for a detailed description of the elaborate festival of the Thirteen Kama Maṇḍalas

is the Great Gathering of the Anuyoga.[359] Getsé also enumerates the ritual, technical, and contemplative knowledge possessed by these visiting masters. While Getsé is not specific, I strongly suspect that that these visiting lamas primarily or exclusively taught the new Mindrölling liturgies of the Kama composed by Terdak Lingpa and Lochen Dharmaśri. The Degé royal court celebrated the visit from the Mindrölling lamas and "provided the funds for a feast and the merit was dedicated (accordingly)."[360]

Guru Trashi's History also has a brief account of the third Dzokchen Rinpoché's revival of the Kama in Degé. It occurs in the context of the third Dzokchen Rinpoché's life story, as part of its history of Dzokchen Monastery, and thus portrays it as his work alone. The passage reads,[361]

> "In accordance with the prophecy made by Dorjé Drak Rigdzin Chenpo, (Dzokchen Rinpoché) newly and precisely instituted the practices from Orgyen Mindrölling of the Nyingma Kama. Chief among them were the amazing festivities of the thirteen maṇḍalas of the *Great Gathered Assembly* and *Magical Net*, (including) the

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[359] No Atiyoga maṇḍalas are performed because that vehicle transcends deities and maṇḍalas. This is the reason Getsé writes that the lamas from Mindroling transmitted the maṇḍalas from the Sūtra, Illusion, "and so on," not completing the *Trio of Sūtra, Magical Net, and Mind Series* (*mdo sgyu sems gsum*).

[360] Ibid., 217.1; sde dges dgyes ston yon gnang bsngo rgyas btab.

[361] Ngawang Lodrö, Guru Trashi's History, 803, khyad par rdo brag rig 'dzin chen po'i lung bstan dang rjes su mthun par rnying ma bka' ma tshogs chen 'dus pa dang sgyu 'phrul gtso bor gyur pa'i dkyil 'khor bcu gsum gyi sgrub mchod ngo mtshar che ba/ gar thig dbyangs rol bcas bshams/s grigs lam thams cad o rgyan smin grol gling pa'i phyag bzhes ji lta ba bzhin gsar 'dzugs dang.

arrangements of the dances, measurements (of the maṇḍalas), chants, music, and all the behavioral regulations."

This passage continues by listing all of the ritual implements, musical instruments, costumes, and images the Dzokchen Rinpoché procured for the performance of these festivities at Dzokchen.

After their arrival in Degé, Getsé invited the Mindrölling lamas to come to Katok to teach the Kama maṇḍalas to him and his monks. He writes, "Because I wanted to institute the assemblage of main (Kama) deities at the see of Katok, I made a request about such and they happily accepted (to come to Katok at some point during their stay)."[362] Before the Mindrölling lamas could come to Katok, though, Getsé had to complete construction on Zhingkyong's reliquary stupa, compose its memorial *Inventory of Zhingkyong's Reliquary*, and hold the consecration ceremony. Shortly after the conclusion of several year's worth of funerary obligations to his master Zhinkyong, the Mindrölling teachers arrived at Katok and issued in a new era at the monastery.

In the middle of 1791 the Mindrölling teachers and Dzokchen Rinpoché came to Katok to transmit the Kama rituals. This was carried out in a systematic way in which the visiting lamas trained a class of fifty Katok monks over several months. The relevant passage reads, "The master teachers from Minling arrived and I received them. We spoke in great detail. On the day of a good planet and date, the

[362] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Autobiography, 216.7; kaH thog gdan sar gtso bstus tshugs 'dod pas/ de tshul snyan phul dgyes bzhin zhal bzhes gnang phyi nang gsang ba'i bka' 'phros smar bar mdzad.

excellent incarnation (Dzokchen) Rinpoché accepted the responsibility and administered the commencement of the training of about fifty monks."[363] However, Getsé did not stay for the course and instead traveled to his personal monastery, Dralak Gön. At his monastery Getsé led another training session – "just like the prior ones" (*sngar mtshungs*) – and also composed a monastic customary for its retreat center.[364] Getsé was then called back early to Degé for rituals, after which he returned to Katok. Getsé doesn't mention meeting the Mindrölling lamas again, but does say that when he arrived the monks were performing the rituals for the first time and he was very overjoyed (*thog mar btsugs 'dug yid rab spro bar byung*).[365]

Getsé and Dzokchen were doubtlessly very pleased with the successful execution of their plans. The royal court was supportive, the ranking Sakya lama at court participated to some degree, and the monks at Katok (and presumably at Dzokchen too) gained competence in the Kama maṇḍalas. In order to round out their training in the Kama, Getsé would also need to train his monks in the tantric commentaries of the key Kama doctrinal text, the *Secret Nucleus*. Nevertheless a certain number of figures at Katok expressed criticism of these changes to the recent program at Katok. Getsé writes, "I heard that some people said, 'We didn't have this

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[363] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Autobiography, 218.3; de'i 'phral smin gling slob dpon phebs byung bar/ mjal 'phrad 'byor ston gsung 'phros zhib smar byung/ gza' tshes bzang nyin mchog sprul rin po ches/ thugs khur bzhes nas 'dus pa lnga bcu skor/ bslab sbyang dbu btsugs bkod 'doms.

[364] Ibid., 218.4. The *Monastic Customary for Dralak Retreat Center* (*bkra lag sgrub sde'i bca' yig sogs*) will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

[365] Ibid., 219.1

before. He is being fickle (*a gsar*).'"[366] Some of the complaints may have come from partisans of the Longsel treasures who were worried that the Kama might displace the predominance of the treasures. In time their fears would be allayed as Getsé did not seek to establish the Kama as the primary, much less exclusive, ritual focus of Katok.

Other detractors who complained about Getsé introducing foreign elements at Katok might have been concerned not about the treasures losing status *per se* but about the adoption of another monastery's Kama traditions. We saw in the previous chapter that Mindrölling's Kama traditions were already circulating at Katok by the time of Getsé's youth, as Zhingkyong and Zhichen trained him in the Mindrölling exegetical traditional of the *Sūtra Initiation* and *Secret Nucleus*. Later in this section we will show that Getsé's major writings on the *Secret Nucleus* were based entirely on the Mindrölling tradition and that he did not write any commentaries on the writings of early Katok scholars of the Kama. Thus it is eminently reasonable to assume that some of the people who complained he was being "fickle" were concerned that he was importing wholesale the Kama traditions of a new monastery, while neglecting to revive Katok's own rich heritage.[367]

In his *Autobiography* Getsé shares some of his defense to the critics of his campaign to revive the Kama. Firstly he asserts that historically the Kama was at the

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[366] Ibid., 219.2, 'ga' zhigs ngar med ag gsar [read a gsar] byed zer thos.

[367] A counter argument might be that this only proves that all the Katok lineages were defunct by this time and that he could not revive teaching lineages whose lines of continuous transmission had been cut. This may be but Getsé never says as much. He simply ignores the Katok tradition, without giving any excuses for why he did not revive them.

core of Katok's religious program, and is thus not either alien or new. Secondly he turns the tables and indicts those Nyingma followers who have abandoned the Kama for practicing a degenerate form of the religion. Getsé's first line of defense is reminiscent of Tsewang Norbu's pessimistic history of Katok. Getsé claims that the Kama was a Katok specialty from the monastery's founding up through the Drung masters.[368] Not only that, during these many centuries Katok masters were actually exporting the tradition to other communities throughout Tibet. The implication was that at present Katok is regretfully on the receiving end of the circulation of the Kama. Getsé writes,[369]

> That (which we are reestablishing) is the Katok dharma. The thirteen generations of lamas – (beginning with) Dampa, Tsangtön, and Jampa – up through the thirteen generations of Drungs propagated the *Sūtra*, *Magical Net*, and *Mind Series* throughout central, western and eastern Tibet. During the intermediate period (*bar skabs*) the Katok teachings fluctuated. Subsequently the Mindrölling brothers became concerned and revived the teachings of the *Trio of Sūtra, Magical Net, and Mind*. I am emulating their rekindling of the embers of the teachings. I explain that (the Kama) is our ancestral dharma but nobody

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[368] Tsewang Norbu and Getsé disagree, however, on the Drung lamas. Tsewang Norbu saw them as having harmed the teachings.

[369] Ibid., 219.2; de ni kaH thog chos yin te/ dam gtsang byams gsum bla rabs bcu gsum dang/ drung rabs bcu gsum yan chad mdo sgyu sems/ dbus gtsang khams gsum kun la dar bar mdzad/ bar skabs kaH thog bstan pa 'phel 'grib byung/ slad nas smin gling sku mched thugs bskyed kyis/ mdo sgyu sems gsum bstan pa slong mdzad las/ bstan pa'i me ro gso ba'i lugs su byas/ pha chos yin par bshad kyang go mkhan med rnying ma'i grub mtha' gzhung shing yo ga gsum/ de yi snying po mdo sgyu sems gsum yin rgyu mtshan cung zad go nas 'bad pas btsal.

> understands. The central pillar of the Nyingma tenet system is the Triad of Yogas, the essence of which is the *Trio of Sūtra, Magical Net, and Mind Series*. Once they understand this reasoning a little they exert themselves (in the Kama).

As asserted before, Getsé's approach to the revival of the Kama was non-oppositional and did not involve an attempt to marginalize the treasures at the expense of the Kama. However, in this passage Getsé is indirectly critical of Longsel Nyingpo and the treasures. The intermediate period during which the teachings "fluctuated" (*'phel 'grib*) - a polite way of saying deteriorate - is precisely the era of Longsel Nyingpo and his immediate successors. Getsé is not blaming Longsel for the degeneration of the teachings but the association can be read into this periodization of Katok's history. Getsé also implies that the Kama is more orthodox than the treasures. The trio of the three yogas – Maha, Anu, and Ati – is common to both the Kama and treasure systems, but Getsé says that the essences of these three are their respective Kama traditions: the *Sūtra Which Gathers All Intentions*, *Magical Net*, and the *Mind Series* tantras such as the *All-Creating King*. The treasures are not explicitly excluded from being considered a component of the essence of the Nyingma system, but neither does Getsé label them as such.

This lengthy passage about Getsé's reintroduction of the Kama at Katok shifts midway through to an offensive posture and makes strong condemnations of his

contemporary Nyingma brethren. They are faulted for abandoning the Kama for mere ritualism, and then for not even practicing the rituals correctly:[370]

> These days some lamas and monks who declare themselves to be Nyingma have not (even encountered) simply the name of our tradition's essential tenet system, not to mention striving to study it. With respect to even merely the regular rituals, exorcism, and thread-cross done to make a living, they do not even think that they need the (pertinent) initiations, transmissions, retreats, and abilities. Alas! Regarding this decline of the Teachings, some people from other sects say, "All contemporary Nyingmapas have lapsed into exorcism, thread-cross, and the triad of suppression, burnt offerings, and casting out of tormas (*mnan sreg 'phang gsum*). Therefore (the Trio of) Sūtra, Magical Net, and Mind Series – the essence of the Nyingma teachings – have long ago dissipated into the dharmadhatu." There are numerous impartial statements like that.

This quote is obviously describing a segment of the population of both village lamas and monks at backwoods monasteries, who operate in remote villages and perform a repertoire of "worldly" rituals such as healings, deity ransoms, and thread-crosses. Here Getsé is exploiting an apparently deep-seated tension between them

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[370] Ibid., 219.5; deng dus rnying mar khas len bla grwa 'ga'/ rang lugs grub mtha'i snying po ming tsam yang/ thos pa don gnyer lta ci za chog gi/ rim gro gto mdos tsam la'ang dbang lung dang/ bsnyen pa las rung dgos snyam sems las med/ kyi hud 'di 'dra bstan pa'i 'grib lugs la/ gzhan phyogs 'ga' yis deng sus rnying ma pa/ thams cad gto mdos mnan sreg 'phang gsum la/ 'byams pas rnying bstan snying po mdo sgyu sems/ chos dbyings klong thim yun ring songs zhes zer/ gzu bor gnas pa'i gsung de shin tu mang.

and elite monastics in order to promote his new value system in which the Kama must be accepted as the pinnacle of rituals and doctrines, and become mainstream again. In painting the Nyingma world in the stark terms of either scholars of the Kama or barefoot priests, Getsé can be seen to suggest that those who do not worship the Kama the way he does are no better than village priests.

At the end of this excerpt Getsé references the impartial (*gzu bor gnas pa*) condemnation of contemporary Nyingmas by those of other sects. It can be said with some certainty that he is alluding to Tuken Lozang Chökyi Nyima's (*thu'u bkwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma*; 1737-1802) 1802 history and doctrinal analysis of the Tibetan sects called the *Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems* (*grub mtha' thams cad kyi khungs dang 'dod tshul ston pa legs bshad shel gyi me long*).[371] Of course this work was written over ten years after the event described in Getsé's *Autobiography,* but considering that Getsé did not write his life story until right before his death in the 1820s, and the similar phrasing of the two texts, it is likely that Getsé is alluding to Tuken in this passage. In fact, we know from Dudjom Rinpoché's 1966 *Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* that at least some Nyingma apologists responded to Tuken's work. For instance in the English translation of Dudjom Rinpoché's

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[371] An English translation by Geshe Sopa, et. al. and edited by Roger Jackson is in press. It will be published as part of the Institute of Tibetan Classics' translation series called the Library of Tibetan Classics. The title of this volume will be *The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems: A Tibetan Study of Asian Religious Thought.*

presentation of the Ningma tradition, we find the following excerpt from Tuken's *Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems*,[372]

> "A long time has passed since all the essential doctrines of the trilogy of the *Sūtra which Gathers All Intentions*, the *Magical Net*, and the *Mental Class* and so forth vanished into the primordial purity of original space. The Nyingmapa of today merely treat as essential such mimicry as the chanting of ritual manuals, the material elaboration of feast offerings, and the rites of suppression, burnt offerings, casting out of tormas (*mnan sreg 'phang gsum*), et cetera…."

After recounting the reintroduction of the Kama to Katok, defending his critics, and lashing out at Nyingmapas that he feels are not being true to the tradition, Getsé closes out the record for 1791 with a statement about some of his own efforts to revive the Kama; his humble "emulation" (*lugs su byas pa*) of the work of the great Mindrölling brothers. Getsé remarks,[373]

> I have given the initiation for the *Magical Net* many times. Furthermore, hundreds of times I have entreated upon the guides that uphold the Nyingma teachings not to disregard the preaching, study,

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[372] *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, 735-736. Dudjom Rinpoche, however, quotes this assertion by Tuken to refute it. He does not call it an "impartial statement," as Getsé did. Getsé many polemical works – two of which are directed at Geluk lamas – are deserving of a separate study.

[373] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Autobiography, 219.7; bdag gis sgyu 'phrul dbang tshar mang po bskur/ slar yang rnying bstan 'dzin mdzad 'dren pa rnams/ bstan pa'i gzhung shing mdo sgyu sems gsum sogs/ bka' ma'i bstan pa 'chad spel gsan gsum la/ gal chung mi mdzad gsol ba lan brgyar 'debs.

and contemplation of the Kama teachings, i.e., the *Trio of Sūtra, Magical Net, and Mind Series* – the central pillar of the teachings.

The initial reintroduction of the Kama to the Nyingma monasteries in Degé was a collaborative effort by Getsé and the third Dzokchen Rinpoché in 1791. Unfortunately the very next year Dzokchen Rinpoché passed away. Getsé mentioned in the record for 1789 that he was ill but the actual cause of his early death is not disclosed. He was only 34 years old. From this point on Getsé was now at the helm of this campaign to revive the Kama. He reestablished it on firm footing at Katok and also took bold steps to promote it throughout Kham. Below we will survey his endeavor to spread the exegetical tradition of the *Secret Nucleus* tantra and publish a new edition of the *Collected Tantras of the Nyingmapa* (the repository of tantras on which the Kama rituals, contemplative methods, and doctrines are based).

Getsé Teaches the *Secret Nucleus*

Getsé's entré into the world of Kama scholasticism came early at the age of fifteen in 1774 when Zhingkyong gave him the reading transmission for a recent commentary on the *Secret Nucleus* from the Mindrölling tradition: Rabjam Orgyen Chödrak's *General Exposition on Lochen Dharmaśri's Ornament of the Lord of Secrets*. Getsé reports that Zhingkyong prophetically told him, "Memorize it. In the future you will need to teach it to many assemblies."[374] The following year Zhichen

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[374] Ibid., 179.3; *blor zung slad mang du/ tshogs la 'chad dgos gsung phebs*. "Prophetic statements" (*lung bstan*) are a typical mode of foreshadowing in Tibetan autobiographies.

Kunzang Tenzin taught Getsé the content of the *Ornament of the Lord of Secret's Intention* itself.[375] This was the first time that he had been systematically introduced to the doctrines of the Kama, such as the essentially divine nature of phenomena, the ethics of ritualized violence and sex, and the complex rituals systems accompanied by philosophical tantric reflections. Unfortunately Zhichen trülku died one year later in 1776, after which Getsé did not resume studying the *Secret Nucleus* for almost 20 years. Yet a far deeper education in the *Secret Nucleus* and the *Sūtra Which Gathers All Intentions* was necessary to be an effective proponent of the Kama. Therefore in 1793 Getsé devoted much time to improving his knowledge and experience of both, beginning with sequestering himself away for a one hundred-day retreat on the *Sūtra*.[376]

In the summer of 1793 Getsé traveled to Batang for more training in the exegetical tradition of the *Secret Nucleus*. He studied at Kachö Tsera Monastery (*mkha' spyod rtse ra dgon*) with a lama whom he doesn't name but refers to as the "scholar's scholar and excellent lama" (*mkhas dbang bla ma mchog*).[377] Tsera Monastery was founded in the twelfth century by the first Karmapa Düsum Khyenpa (1110-1193), and visited by several successive Karmapa lamas.[378] In the late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth century the treasure revealer Chöjé Lingpa –

[375] Ibid., 180.2

[376] Ibid., 223.2. Perhaps this retreat was also a prerequisite to performing the initiation.

[377] Ibid., 223.5. I have been unable to find this lama's name.

[378] For more on this monastery see The Histories of the Monasteries of Kardzé Prefecture, vol. 2, 399-401.

Zhingkyong's father – converted it to the Nyingma sect.[379] Years before Getsé's new albit unnamed teacher studied the *Secret Nucleus* under his maternal uncle, with Zhingkyong attending the teachings. Getsé's teacher took extensive notes during this class and Getsé mentions that he made it a point to never be physically separated from his notebook (*'bral spang mdzad pa*).[380] Getsé studied with this master for one month and says that afterwards he memorized the "General Exposition" (*spyi don*); likely Orgyen Chödrak's *General Exposition on the Ornaments of the Lord of Secret's Intention* that he memorized at Zhingkyong's behest many year's earlier. [381] This session seems to mark the last of his *training* in the Kama. From this point on Getsé begins to transmit the initiations and tantric exegesis (*rgyud bshad*) of the Kama.

Later the same year Getsé was invited to give the *Secret Nucleus* initiation and tantric commentaryby a minister from the Gyelrong principality of Tsako (*tsa ko*). The two met when the minister was visiting Degé as part of the funeral services for his recently deceased queen.[382] Getsé remarks that because of the minister's great desire to be initiated into the *Secret Nucleus* and learn its doctrines, he could not refuse the request and traveled to Gyelrong to comply with his wishes. Getsé's *Collected Works* contain a prayer to the masters of the *Secret Nucleus* exegetical line that was likely commissioned by the same minister. The colophon says Getsé

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[379] Ibid.

[380] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Autobiography*, 223.5.

[381] Ibid., 223.7

[382] Ibid., 224.4. The minister's name is given in the *Autobiography* as *byA g+hra*, which looks like the phonetics of a Sanskrit word but may be a rendering of a word in a Gyelrong language.

composed "this supplication to the lineage of the exegetical tradition of the glorious *Secret Nucleus* in response to a request made from afar by the minister of the ruler of Gyelmorong of the East, who is imbued with the dharma eye and is my student, Gyurmé Ngödrup Rapten."[383]

At the beginning of the very next year, 1794, Getsé gave his first teachings on the *Secret Nucleus* to monks at Katok Monastery. "I offered the explanation of the tantra to the assembly of tantric monks."[384] “Tantric monks” (*rgyud grwa rnams)* signifies monks enrolled in winter training sessions on tantric practice, ritual, and doctrine. This is the first time Getsé mentions this term in his *Autobiography* and it is not clear whether these sessions were instituted anew this year or they had been running for many years already. That spring Getsé took the reincarnations of Zhingkyong and Chaktsa to Jangseng encampment (*byang seng sgar*) and gave them half of the explanation of the *Secret Nucleus*.[385] Furthermore, without identifying him by name, Getsé says that one of the young trülkus began his own set of notes on the exegesis. The three of them returned to Katok for the annual Tenth Day festival, after which Getsé concluded his teaching to the young lamas. Soon after Getsé gave another course on the *Secret Nucleus* to the reincarnate lama of Dzakha Monastery

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[383] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Supplication to the Lineage of the Secret Nucleus*, 156; dpal ldan gsang ba snying po'i bshad rgyun rim gsol 'debs shar rgyal mo rong gis skyong ba'i blon po chos mig ldan pa rang gi slob ma 'gyur med dngos grub rab brtan gyis rgyang ring po nas bskul ngor. No date is given in the colophon.

[384] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Autobiography, 224.1; rgyud grwa rnams gyis [read kyi] tshogs su rgyud bshad phul.

[385] Ibid., 225.6

and a few other "vajra students" (*rdo rje'i slob ma*).[386] This year Getsé's unnamed *Secret Nucleus* teacher in Batang died. When Getsé received news of his passing, he immediately went to Tsera Monastery to conduct the funeral. Mentions of "explanations of the tantra" (*rgyud bshad*) drop off after this year, but continue until the end of the work.

Getsé stopped writing his life story while in the middle of recording the year 1820 when he was 60 years old. His disciple the second Zhingkyong Trülku composed the account of his final years.[387] The second Zhingkyong's section is very illuminating because he describes things differently from Getsé, thereby providing new details and perspectives on commonplace events in his life. He also discusses certain topics that Getsé omitted from his portion of the *Autobiography*, including episodes relating to Getsé's teaching of the Secret Nucleus. For instance Zhingkyong refers to a teaching session on the tantra held at Dralak Monastery in 1824 as a *bshad grwa* (lit., exegetical school), whereas Getsé always called them simply "(periods for) explanation of the tantra" (*rgyud bshad)*. Zhingkyong's use of *bshad grwa* contributes to our knowledge of the history of this term's usage. Later in the same century it would be used to mean a full time academy.[388] Here we can see that in the early nineteenth century the term meant short term, irregular study sessions.

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[386] Ibid., 225.7.; *'dzar ka* is clealy an alternative spelling to *dzaH ka*, a Nyingma monastery close in Katok in present-day Pelyül County. See the *Histories of the Monasteries in Kardzé Prefecture*, vol. 3, 157-161.

[387] The second Zhingkyong's full name was Jikmé Rindzin Gönpo (*'jigs med rig 'dzin mgon po*; d.u.). See Jamyang Gyeltsen, *A Brief History of Katok*, 106.

[388] Cf. Dreyfus, "Where Do Commentarial School's Come From?"

Another facet of Getsé's revival of the Kama is his composition of commentaries on important rituals and tantras. A notable example is his treatise on the *Secret Nucleus* tantra, written in 1814. The text is called *Set of Notes (To Be Consulted When Giving) Explanations on the Overview of the Secret Nucleus*.[389] The colophon reads, in part,[390]

> Previously I compiled some scriptural quotes and passages (*tshig tshogs*) from explanations that cover the general overview of the Sri *Secret Nucleus* tantra, such as the *Ornament of the Lord of Secret's Intent* and Ranjampa Chödrak's *Notes* (on the preceding), and for the sake of easy comprehension wrote them out in a notebook (*zin tho*). Later students such as nephew Penden Jikme, who clarifies of the Teachings, requested me (to edit these notes) saying, "By all means we need something that clarifies the contents of the text, including the manner of explication that proceeds through each of the chapters of the tantra." Following the intent of the *Ornament of the Lord of Secret's Intent*, I composed this by adhering to the principle of brevity, (only) adding a few indispensible (teachings).

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389 The full title is dpal ldan gsang ba snying po'i spyi don gyi bshad pa'i zin bris bla ma'i man ngag don gsal snying po legs bshad rol mtsho.

390 Ibid., 397; dpal ldan gsang ba snying po'i rgyud kyi don ltar bshad pa dgongs rgyan dang rab 'byams pa chos grags kyi zin bris sogs las/ lung dang tshig tshogs cung zad bsdus te/ thugs su chud sla ba'i phyir zin thor sga mo zhig nas bris pa slar yang bstan pa'i gsal byed rje dbon dpal ldan 'jigs med sogs don gnyer rnams kyis rgyud kyi le'u so sos ston tshhul sogs khongs snos pa'i gsal ba zhig cis kyang dgos zhes bskul bas/ gsang bdag dgongs rgyan gyi dgongs pa ltar la med ka med chags kyis [illegible passage] kha bskang ba las gzhan yi ge nyung ba kho na gtso bor byas te.

The account of the composition of this text in the *Autobiography* confirms what is said in the colophon. Getsé composed the work after teaching the tantra to Nyingtrul (*snying sprul*; a reincarnate lama associated with Katok), Getsé's nephew Penden, and others. The *Autobiography* says, "In response to the requests of Penden I wrote a manual on the explanation of the general exposition that proceeds by teaching each chapter of the tantra."[391] The text reads like a lecture on the text and is interspersed with many interlinear annotations. Some of the annotations are didactic and tell the reader – who might be a junior teacher – which elements of general dharma preaching need to be interspersed at those points. Other annotations spell out the contents of lists named in the main body of the text.

As stated earlier, Getsé seemed to be exclusively devoted to the Mindrölling school of Kama exegesis and ritual. This text, his only major work on the *Secret Nucleus*, is a prime example of this fidelity. The colophon is explicit that this work is a manual on teaching the Mindrölling interpretation of the *Secret Nucleus*. The Mindrölling line and the Katok line both derive from the Zur School of explication (*zur lugs*), thus there would not have been any major contradictions between them. However it is curious that Getsé would hue so closely to the dominant tradition of his time and not represent himself as making an attempt to recall the accomplishments of past Katok exegetes of the *Secret Nucleus*.

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[391] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Autobiography, 296.2; dpal ldan gyi/ gsungs ngor rgyud kyi le'u so so nas ston tshul spyi don bshad sbyang de bris so.

Getsé's major treatment of the Sūtra Initiation (*mdo dbang*) is also a faithful rendition of the recent Mindrölling reworking of the initiation ritual. The text is called the *List of Actions to be Performed When Bestowing the Initiation of the Sūtra of the Great Gathered* (*dpal ldan 'dus pa chen po'i mdo yi chu bo bzhi rdzogs kyi dbang bskur ji ltar bya ba'i las tho de nyid la rab tu 'jug pa*). The *Sūtra* initiation is one of the most complex in Tibet, so at thirteen folia in length this work is particularly brief. Getsé gives a lucid account of the virtues of the Mindrölling tradition of the *Sūtra*, saying that the Mindrölling brothers – Terdak Lingpa and Lochen Dharmashri – revived the simplicity of the early tradition of Dropukpa.[392] He says that after Dropukpa the initiation ritual became extremely complicated by the insertion of many auxiliary initiations within the main initiation. In his careful study of the Mindrölling innovations to the Sutra Initiation, Dalton shows how such complaints were partially directed at a particular Katok initiation manual for the Sūtra.[393] Thus in his works Getsé does not just present the Mindrölling position, but also argues for its interpretive agendas even to the point of implicitly embracing criticism of Katok traditions. Later in the colophon Getsé even acknowledges that certain critics said it was redundant for him to compose a ritual manual as so many

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[392] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, List of Actions to be Performed When Bestowing the Initiation of the Sūtra of the Great Gathered, 22.6.

[393] Dalton, "The Uses of the *Dgongs Pa 'Dus Pa'i Mdo* in the Development of the Rnying-Ma School of Tibetan Buddhism," 154-156 and 182. The offending Katok liturgy was Stream of Honey (sbrang rtsi'i chu rgyun) by Moktön Dorjé Pelzangpo's (*rmog ston rdo rje dpal bzang po*; 15th cent.).

already existed.[394] Perhaps these people also meant that he should not try to make the earlier Katok tradition obsolete by writing liturgies representing another tradition altogether.

We have seen that Getsé collaborated with the third Dzokchen Rinpoché to reestablish the practice and study of the Kama maṇḍalas and tantric commentaries at the Nyingma Monasteries in Degé through the wholesale importation of the newly formulated Mindrölling writings on the Kama. The Mindrölling brothers formulated their *Sūtra Initation* for easy implementation at other monast eries[395] and their commentarial tradition on the *Secret Nucleus* was already quite voluminous. Perhaps Getsé was intrigued by the promise of unifying the major Nyingma communities through shared practice of study of this new and masterfully crafted and inetgrated set of Kama writings.

Establishing the Mindrölling Kama at Katok allowed Getsé to accomplish two aims at once: allow Katok to tap into the unifying potential of the popular Mindrölling Kama, and to systematically revive the Kama at Katok, whose earlier loss had caused anxiety among some Katok lamas. This second point begs the question as to why Getsé did not revive Katok's older rituals and commentaries on the Kama, either instead of the Mindrölling school or along side it? Getsé's writings

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[394] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, List of Actions to be Performed When Bestowing the Initiation of the Sūtra of the Great Gathered, 24.2.

[395] Dalton, "The Uses of the *Dgongs Pa 'Dus Pa'i Mdo* in the Development of the Rnying-Ma School of Tibetan Buddhism," 224; "The primary purpose of the new Smin-grol-gling *Sūtra* empowerment was no longer to initiate a given disciple into the *Sūtra*'s teachings, but as a community building event. The ceremony was now a performance foremost, and in this sense, its emphasis had shifted from the participants to the observers." This aim was accomplished through the formulation of a Sūtra Initiation ceremony that was both magnificent and brief.

are silent on the matter. In my readings of Getsé's entire *Autobiography* and most of his relevant liturgies and tantric commentaries, he never seems to utter a word about the revival of the Katok writings. Neither does he address whether their lineages have been lost or remained active to some degree. Rather his approach seems to be to universalize the Kama so that the presence of the Kama is more important than any one tradition, and in the process minimizes the importance of the Katok Kama per se.

Codification of Longsel's Treasures

If Getsé did not revive the special Katok tradition of the Kama, then what did he try to construct as the monastery's distinctive religious heritage? The answer is Longsel Nyingpo's treasures. Getsé reworked Longsel's treasures into a substantial repertoire of rituals and contemplative manuals that he placed in a dominant role in Katok's religious program. The preceding section stressed that although Getsé made a very deliberate effort to import the Kama teachings from Mindrölling, he never denigrated or abandoned the treasures in the process. Being a reincarnation of a student of Longsel Nyingpo, Getsé was raised by exponents of the treasure traditions of Dündül Dorjé and Longsel, and began his training in their rituals and contemplative exercises when he was just a child. In fact throughout his life Getsé never stopped teaching these treasures or performing their rituals at important occasions. In fact, Getsé did not simply continue to practice the Longsel treasures out of habit but instead actively codified them through the composition of many liturgies

and practice manuals for use at Katok and its branch monasteries. We will analyze Getsé's editorial interventions into Longsel's treasures, seeing how he reformulated selected treasures to conform to the liturgical and scholastic conventions of large monasteries. I will then examine the ways in which Getsé instituted these treasures as key components of Katok's program of collective rituals and contemplative training.

Longsel's treasures – as we have them in the current xylographic edition from the early twentieth century – contain the standard range of ritual and narrative genres found in the better-known treasure cycles. Longsel's Fierce Guru Blazing Gnosis (*gu ru drag po ye shes 'bar ba*) cycle, for instance, contains many short works covering a multiplicity of ritual forms.[396] A yogi with the *Fierce Guru Blazing Gnosis* volume of treasures would not be wanting for texts upon which to meditate, use in propitiation of dharma protectors or the deployal of thread cross effigies, and to consult for other standard ritual functions. Nevertheless Longsel's treasures were not necessarily written to be ready for performance by relatively large monastic assemblies and Katok Monastery has a long tradition of creating complex rituals. Therefore if Getsé wanted to perform the Longsel Treasures at large festivals and rituals at Katok and at the Dege court, then new ritual expressions of the treasures would need to be composed.

Treasure traditions are dynamic and periodically require the composition of new liturgies and guidebooks (*khrid yig*) that bring the orientation and legitimitzation

[396] This cycle even contains a seventeen-folio work of instruction for the Degé king Sangyé Tenpa.

of a contemporary lama to the tradition, and thereby update the treasures for new times and places. For instance, we saw in a previous chapter that Tsewang Norbu assented to a request by the nephew of his guru Dechen Pema Lingpa to compose liturgies for the latter's treasures. Tsewang Norbu also penned a very important guidebook on the *Gathering of All Precious Jewels* by Jatsön Nyingpo called the *Ornament of the Guru's Intention* (*dkon mchog spyi 'dus kyi khrid yig gu ru'i dgongs rgyan*). Jamgon Kongtrul, in turn, composed two commentaries on Tsewang Norbu's liturgies.[397]

In many ways liturgies written after the treasure revealer's death are the primary medium through which old treasures are conveyed to new audiences. Cuevas' study of the history of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* offers a rigorous case study of just this process.[398] This famous manual for deathbed and funerary recitation is the product of additions and reformulations made over many centuries. The compilation we have possess and associate with Karma Lingpa gained its current level of sophistication and popularity through the hard work of lamas that toiled long after the death of the original treasure revealer. Likewise, Getsé played a crucial role in updating and popularizing Longsel Nyingpo's treasures. If Getsé's colophons are to be believed, during his time there was a need for more substantial liturgies for Longsel's treasures than those provided by Longsel himself or written by his successors. Getsé accomplished the codification of Longsel's treasures by fitting core

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[397] These are found in *Gyurmé Tenpa Namgyel*, Thirteen Instructions of the Katok Oral Tradition, vol. 9.

[398] Cuevas, Hidden History of the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

elements of Longsel's treasures into liturgical formats that resembled mainstream liturgies for recitation in large assemblies. Getsé also supplemented these writings with material from other treasures cycles, including the venerable *Gathering of the Guru's Intention*. Thus Getsé not only changed Katok by codifying the role of Longsel Nyingpo's treasures within its overall program, he also transformed the treasures in the process.

The earliest dated Longsel liturgy of Getsé's belongs to the Fierce Guru Blazing Gnosis cycle. The text is a sādhana framework (*sgrub khog*) and is entitled *Sādhana Framework for the Fierce Guru Blazing Gnosis, The Prince of Wish Fulfillment who Causes the Two Siddhis to Rain Down* (*bla ma drag po ye shes rab 'bar gyi sgrub khog yid bzhin dbang rgyal grub gnyis char 'bebs*) and was composed in 1811. The *Autobiography* contains colorful details about the early reception of this work. Getsé writes,[399]

> Because Lozang Tsultrim had died, Gyurmé Kelzang came to make a donation towards the transference of merit (to him). We talked about many things. He supplicated me with a request to (compose) a sādhana framework liturgy for the *Fierce Guru* accomplishment festival. I saw an omen in a dream in which the supreme refuge lama gave me a small

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[399] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Autobiography, 298.4; blo bzang tshul khrims 'das pas bsngo yon tu/ 'gyur skal phebs shing gang ci'i gsung 'phros byung/ khong gis bskul bas gur drag sgrub chen gyi/ khog dbub sgrig chog gnang gsol gtab pas/ man lam skyabs mchog bla mas yig chung zhig/ gnang bas 'di bzhin yin zhes gnang thob ltas/ byung bas sgrub chen chog khrigs byas mod kyang/ skul pa po yi nyams bzhes gzhan dbang song/ rang dgon gzhan la'ang tshugs thub re byas kyang/ rang lugs mi mkhyen gal chung lta bur mdzad. Getsé also composed a gu ru drag po'i brgyud bskang (found in vol. 5, 347-352 of his Collected Works).

> text and said, "(write it) like this one." Although I did compose the liturgical arrangement for the accomplishment festival, the requester's personal practices fell under the sway of others. Even though I tried to establish (the liturgy) at my monastery and others, people appeared to not understand our own tradition or did not value it.[400]

The colophon of the *Sādhana Framework for the Fierce Guru Blazing Gnosis* does not conceal the composite nature of this work. It states, "(Getsé) combined the sādhana framework of the treasure texts themselves and the design (*dgongs pa*) of the arrangement of the ritual activities composed by the precious treasure revealer and (inserted certain) indispensible addenda lifted from other authentic (sources)…"[401] Getsé compiled passages from the original treasures and Longsel's own compositions, and supplemented them with selections from the authoritative writings of others. The result is a very orderly liturgy with a dense internal structure, as befits the "framework" (*khog dbub*) genre.[402]

The next major Longsel liturgy in Getsé's Collected Works is even longer and more complicated. This is the 1822 Liturgical Arrangement of the Three Bodies

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[400] Later in the chapter we will see that a few years after this Getsé did indeed institute the practice of the *Fierce Guru* accomplishment festivals at Katok and its branch monasteries. In the above passage Getsé is simply expressing frustration that his flock did not share his enthusiasm for this work when it was first written.

[401] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Sādhana Framework for the Fierce Guru Blazing Gnosis, 135.1; gter gzhung sgrub khog dang gter ston rin po ches mdzad pa'i las khrigs kyi dgongs pa bsdebs nas kha skong med ka med cung zad tshad ldan gzhan nas kyang blangs te…

[402] At its topmost level there are three sections: the aim to be accomplished, the method for accomplishing that aim, and the fruit of accomplishing it (*gang bsgrub bya'i yul, ji ltar sgrub pa'i thabs, grub pa 'bras bu*). The middle section is in turn subdivided into instructions on the preliminary, main, and concluding rituals (*sngon 'gro, dngos gzhi, rjes kyi sdom*).

Sādhana of the Indestructible Essence of the Luminous Expanse (klong gsal rdo rje snying po'i sku gsum sgrub thabs chog khrigs). The colophon indicates that it too is a composite of different treasure texts by Longsel and the writings and treasures of other lamas. When Getsé and his monks were gathered at his Bango retreat center to perform the rituals of this treasure, a reworked liturgy was necessary. The colophon says, "Because the adamantine words of the treasure text are especially brief they were taken as the root life force (of this liturgy, on the basis of which I) lifted necessary liturgical addenda from the Gathering of the Guru's Intention's Accomplishment of the Enlightened Mind of the Three Roots (rtsa gsum thugs sgrub gsal byed thugs kyi nor bu) and the Stages of Accomplishing Long Life for One's Own Benefit (rang don tshe sgrub kyi rim pa), the Individual Accomplishment (sgos sgrub) from Gathering of the Entire Intention, the Five Garlands of Skulls (dgongs pa yongs 'dus thod phreng sde lnga) in Dündül's treasures, and others, and formulated (these pericope) as a liturgical arrangement." [403] Getsé wrote other such liturgies, including an empowerment ritual for the Gathering of All Sugatas of the Eight Pronouncements, another of the Longsel treasures that Getsé promoted at Katok and its branch monasteries.[404]

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[403] Ibid., gter gzhung rdo rje'i tshig ha cang bsdus pas rtsa ba'i srod tu bzung/ cho ga'i kha bskang dgos rigs bla ma dgongs 'dus pa'i rtsa gsum thugs sgrub gsal byed thugs kyi nor bu dang rang don tshe sgrub kyi ri mo/ bdud 'dul gter byon dgongs pa yongs 'dus thod phreng sde lnga'i sgod sgrub sogs nas blangs te chog khrigs su spel ba...

[404] The full title is bka' brgyad yongs 'dus kyi dkyil 'khor du bdag nyid 'jug pa'i cho ga snying po dril ba, and it is found in the Collected Works, vol. 5, 189-198.

Getsé also composed a major guidebook on the practice of Dzokchen as taught in the *Indestructible Essence of the Luminous Expanse* (*Longsel Dorjé Nyingpo*; *klong gsal rdo rje snying po*). The work is long, 211 folia in length, and the colophon notes it was composed at Katok. In the colophon Getsé recounts that Zhingkyong accepted the task of composing "an extensive treatise that encapsulates all of the salient points of the Vajrayāna" (*rdo rje theg pa'i lam gyi gnad 'gag thams cad dril ba'i legs bshad rgyas pa zhig*).[405] He did not complete the guidebook, however, and subsequently Getsé brought it to completion in response to the wishes of some students, showing fidelity to the outline established by its original author. For some reason this work was not included in Getsé's *Collected Works* but instead circulated separately. It was published in India in a volume containing only the root treasures of this cycle and Getsé's commentary, suggesting that perhaps in Tibet it circulated in a solitary volume devoted to secret Dzokchen teachings. The text was to some degree influential because the third Getsé incarnation wrote another two volumes on the *Indestructible Essence of the Luminous Expanse*.[406] As with the liturgies, this work is a domestication of Longsel's treasures. Getsé took Longsel's treasures and codified them in the form of a learned and highly structured guidebook. Further research is required to determine how Longsel Nyingpo's Dzokchen teachings were transformed in the process. Regardless, the important point here is that Getsé took a more or less unsystematic corpus of Dzokchen treasures and

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[405] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Guidebook to the Indestructible Essence of the Luminous Expanse, 475.5.

[406] These two works take up volumes 12 and 13 of Getsé Gyurmé Tenpa Namgyel, *Thirteen Instructions of the Katok Aural Tradition.*

reworked them into a treatise written for a turn-of-the-nineteenth century monastic audience. In this way Katok gained a new Dzokchen tradition that was both rooted in the revelations of the monastery's own treasure revealer and codified by a scholar who was familiar with the state of the art in Dzokchen treatises, especially the Longchen Nyingtik.

Establishing Getsé's Treasure Liturgies in the Liturgical Calendar

Now we turn our analysis to how these works were institutionalized at Katok and its branch monasteries. First we will explore a monastic customary written by Getsé that shows how he placed Longsel's treasures - expecially the ones for which he wrote liturgies - at the center of the Katok liturgical and contemplative program. Then we will examine the numerous times that Getsé represents himself in his *Autobiography* employing Longsel's treasures as the chief liturgies for high-profile but one-off rituals at Katok and Degé.

Getsé wrote several monastic customaries that provide details on the liturgical and contemplative programs of Katok. These consistently indicate that Getsé did not intend to displace Longsel Nyingpo's treasures but rather to reshape them to be more amenable to collective practice and ritual, while looking to the resurgent Kama as the heart of its seminary study. One such monastic customary was written for Gyelsé Monastery (*rgyal sras dgon*), in present-day Jomda County, in the T.A.R.[407] Getsé visited this monastery in 1817 during a long stay in the Gonjo area. His

[407] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Monastic Customary of Gyelsé Monastery* (rgyal sras dgon kyi bca' yig).

Autobiography reports arriving at Gyelsé and being given a grand welcome and then presiding over a seven-day assembly.[408] Getsé then traveled around the area for sometime, returning to Gyelsé two more times before returning to Katok. On his final stay at Gyelsé Getsé reports filling statues (*rten gzhug*) with thirty yak-loads worth o f materials.[409] Given the mention of consecration and large-scale statue construction it appears that the monastery was going through a period of expansion – an excellent time for the composition of a new monastic customary.

The *Autobiography* does not menti on the composition of this monastic customary but its colophon is detailed. "On a virtuous date during the sixth month of the fire ox year [1817], (also) called Wangchuk, Gyurmé Tsewang Chokdrup of Glorious Katok arranged this work through prioritizing the stages of the four (assembly) sessions in emulation of the customs of victorious Katok, thereby refining the older monastic customary (by) harmonizing it with the contemporary situation."[410] Unfortunately we do not have Katok's own monastic customary from this time period but as it states here, the liturgical program covered in this work is modeled on Katok's. A customary from a branch temple is especially valuable because it gives a clear indication of how the Katok tradition was devised for implementation at its satellites. What is evident in this customary is that the liturgical

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408 Ibid., 306.7.

409 Ibid.,

410 Ibid.; rgyal ba kaH thog pa'o phyag srol ltar gyi thun bzhi'i rim pa gtso bor byas te bca' yig sngon ma la 'phri bsnan yul dus gnas skabs dang bstun nas bgyis pa 'di nyid dpal kaH thog pa 'gyur med tshe dbang mchog grub kyis dbang phyug ces me glang lo'i chu stod can gyi gral chos dge bar bkod pa.

calendar and contemplative practices are dominated by Longsel Nyingpo's treasures. Below we will go through the regulations and ritual curriculum of the monastery as detailed in the customary.

If this document is to be believed, nearly every one of the monastery's communal rituals was based on Longsel Nyingpo's treasures. Even the important Dzokchen retreat is based entirely on Longsel's Dzokchen treasures, the *Indestructible Essence of the Luminous Expanse*. At the end of the year, during the twelfth month, the monastery performed the "gütor" (torma; *dgu gtor*) ritual in which a large offering cake (*gtor ma*) is sacrificed on the twenty-ninth. The liturgy used for this is derived from Longsel Nyingpo's *Fierce Guru* cycle.[411] For five days at the end of the third month the monks performed the repelling torma (*gtor bzlog*) ritual of Longsel's *Gathering of All the Sugatas of the Eight Pronouncements*. The fourth month always included a busy wee klong series of rituals based on Longsel's Avalokiteśvara cycle, the *Unexcelled Super-Secret Form of Great Compassionate One* (*thugs rje chen po yang gsang bla med*). During the fifth month the monks at Gyelsé Monastery would perform their annual Tenth Day festival. To this day many branch monasteries of Katok celebrate the Tenth Day not on the monkey month – the sixth month – but the month before in order that they will be able to attend the festivities at their mother monastery on the actual holiday. The liturgy followed for the Tenth Day is the *Ritual of the Three Bodies of the Peaceful and Wrathful*. In this

[411] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Autobiography*, 234.4

monastic customary Getsé does not mention the performance of a single annual group ritual that is not centered on the Longsel treasures.

Of course this document is normative and does not necessarily reflect exactly what was being done on the ground, but it is illustrative of Getsé's agenda to install Longsel's treasures at the front and center of Katok's ritual program. At this point it can be mentioned that one treasure of Longsel's did not attract the attention of Getsé: Longsel's *Secret Nucleus*-themed treasures highlighted in Chapter One. Perhaps Getsé wanted the Kama to have a monopoly on *Secret Nucleus* practice and study at Katok. The founders of Mindrölling Monastery intended their formulation of the Kama to be a common tradition shared by all the major Nyingma monasteries. Getsé accepted this proposition and instituted the Mindrölling Kama at Katok. While the Mindrölling imports eclipsed the earlier and distinctive Katok treatises and liturgies on the Kama, under Getsé the Longsel treasures consolidated their position as the main uniquely Katok component of the monastery's programs. Prior to Longsel, the Kama was Katok's special heritage and the treasures they practiced all had their origins outside of Katok. Longsel Nyingpo became a leader at Katok late in his life and his relatives and students kept his treasures active at Katok, but it was Getsé who rendered him into *the* Katok treasure revealer.

Public performances of Longsel's treasures

Getsé further institutionalized Dündül and Longsel's treasures at Katok and its branch monasteries through the performance of the treasures at important ritual

events. Getsé's *Autobiography*, for one, mentions several times in which Getsé performed consecrations using only a Longsel treasure for the liturgy, or specifies that a Longsel liturgy was the chief liturgy used. In his *Autobiography,* Getsé rarely mentions specific liturgies used for rituals, the one exception being important gatherings like the consecration of large new icons. Here in this subsection I will document some of these instances as part of this study's claim that Getsé promoted Longsel's treasures as vigorously as he did the Kama.

A representative example of Getsé's use of Longsel's treasures at a high profile ritual when he was meant to represent Katok monastery is his use of a Longsel treasure in the consecration of a new temple at the Degé capital. The passage in the *Autobiography* reads,[412]

> As ordered by the Degé family, in the spring of the wood pig year [1815] I went (to the capital) to insert the dhāraṇī filling inside (new statues of the) Three Long-life Gods. I stayed in the new temple and everyday Degé family members would visit and, together with the monks of the monastic college, I conferred the extensive and middle-length initiations for the attainment of mind several times. I also offered the Degé family guidance (*go khrid*) through the *Charioteer of*

[412] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Autobiography, 207.2, shing phag dpyid kar sde dge'i bka' bzhin du/ tshe lha rnam gsum gzungs gzhug 'bul bar song/ lha khang gsar par bsdad nas nyin ltar bzhin/ sde dge byon zhing grwa tshang dang bcas par/ thugs sgrub dbang bskur rgyas 'bring lan 'ga' byas/ sde dger bden gnyis shing rta'i go khrid phul/ bdu mdzad gur drag rol dpon la sogs par/ khrid btab gzungs gzhug thun mong thun min gyi/ man ngag klong gsal gter byon dgongs pa bzhin/ lag len bstar… zla gcig tsam nas gzungs rnams phul grub bar/ mkhan chen drung nas rab gnas dngos sta mdzad/ bdag gis tshe sgrub yang gsang bla med la/ brten pa'i rab gnas dngos sta nyin gsum.

> *the Two Truths* (the auto-commentary on Jikmé Lingpa's *Treasury of Positive Qualites*; *bden gnyis shing rta*). I gave instructions about the *Fierce Guru* to the chant leader and instructions to the master of music and others. I did this in accordance with the oral instructions on ordinary and extraordinary dhāra ṇī filling as found in Longsel's treasures… We finished filling (the statues) with dhāraṇīs after about a month. The great abbot performed the preparatory rites and actual ritual for (his stage of) the consecration. In reliance on (Longsel's) *Utterly Secret and Unsurpassed Accomplishment of Long Life* I (also) performed the preparatory rites and actua1 ritual (of my stage of) the consecration, taking three days.

Getsé was trained in the rituals of many treasure cycles, including those of older and well-established treasure revealers. Yet for this important occasion in which he served out his duties as a court chaplain by ritually filling new statues with consecrated substances with the goal of ensuring the longevity of members of the royal family, Getsé highlights the chief role of Longsel Nyingpo's treasures in the execution of these ritual duties.

Another performance of a Longsel liturgy at a major event occurred three years later in 1818. That year Getsé consecrated at Katok a large three -story tall statue of Amitāyus, the Buddha of long-life. Construction on the statue began in 1814 and Getsé says, "(In the spring of that year) I convened a workshop (*bzo grwa*) to

construct a three-story image of Amitayus. I gave the artisans *thog ston spa dar* (?). The chant leader and I conferred about the measurements."[413] Construction of this large statue was completed three years later in 1817. Getsé's life story recounts in great detail the valuable materials used to create and decorate the statue, and the holy substances used to fill the statue. It appears from the narrative that Chinese craftspeople were also involved in the creation of the statue.

The consecration was a grand affair and the Longsel liturgies used during the ceremony are given pride of place in the account of the event. The *Autobiography* reads,[414]

> Five maṇḍalas of the Kama and Terma were unveiled, chief among them the *Utterly Secret and Unsurpassed Accomplishment of Long Life*. Two days were devoted to the two segments of each (maṇḍala's) consecration rites, i.e., the preparatory rites and the actual ritual, totaling ten days. I sat at the head (of the assembly) and I banished the hindrances and cleansed the "trum" (*bkruM sbyong*) in the pledge-beings, after which the assemblies of the wisdom being gods entered and dissolved. I (offered) a benediction that the indivisibility of the

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[413] Ibid., 295.3; dpyid der tshe 'od dpag med kyi/ snang brnyan thog tshad gsum pa'i bzi grwa bsdus/ bzo bo rnams la thog ston spa dar byin/ bdag dang dbu mdzad gnyis kyis thig tshad bgros.

[414] Ibid., 311.4; tshe sgub yang gsang bla med thog brangs pa'i/ bka' gter dkyil 'khor lnga yi zhal phyes nas/ rang gnas dngos sta sbrags ma nyin gnyis re/ bcu phrag bzhag la bdag nyid dbur bsdad nas/ dam tshig sems par bgegs bskrad bkruM sbyong sogs/ byas mthar ye shes sems dpa'i lha tshogs rnams/ bzhug bstims dam ye dbyer med ji srid bar/ brtan par bzhugs pa'i shis brjod me tog 'thor.

pledge and wisdom (be ings) remain stable for as long as (the statue) abides, and distributed flowers."

The following year Getsé completed another large statue at Katok and consecrated it with a Longsel liturgy. This was a two-story statue of Avalokitesvara that was sponsored by the second Chaktsa Rinpoché but left incomplete upon his early death in 1816. The body of the statue was finished but Getsé took over the project, guilding it and filling it with dharanis. Getsé says, "It was flawlessly built, just like the Amitayus."[415] Nevertheless, its consecration ceremony was scaled back slightly from that of the Amitayus statue. "The consecration was performed with three maṇḍalas of the Kama and Terma, chief among them (Longsel's) *Utterly Secret and Unsurpassed Great Compassionate One*. With two days for each (ma ṇḍala's consecration, including both) the preparatory rites and actual ritual, the ceremony for the (statue) to remain steadfast was offered…"[416] I hope it is clear by now that later in his life, and closer to the time when Getsé actually composed his *Autobiography*, Getsé was consistent in emphasizing the primacy of the Longsel treasures for the purpose of consecrations. In tandem with what we know about how he also made the Longsel treasures central to the liturgical calendar and retreat practices it is possible

[415] Ibid., 314.1; tshe dpag med bzhin nor 'khrul med par grub.

[416] Ibid., thugs rje chen po yang gsang bla med gtsos/ bka' gter dkyil 'khor gsum ldan rab gnas bgyis/ dngos sta nyin zhag gnyis res brtan bzhugs phul.

to say that Getsé codified the primacy of Longsel in the Katok ritual and contemplative program.[417]

Katok Becomes a Regional Center of Learning

The final section of this chapter explores the educational infrastructure put in place by Getsé at Katok and offers case studies of individual students who trained at Katok during the height of this period. It examines the study program instituted at Katok, comparing it with what we know of its curriculum in earlier centuries and discerning the influence on it from prevailing trends in Degé and the Nyingma more broadly. Furthermore this section will document Katok's role among the community of Nyingma monasteries in Kham, showing it to be a preeminent center of learning.

The Teachers Active at Katok at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century

In the early nineteenth century Katok had three generations of Katok-based reincarnate lamas active at the monastery. Representing the senior generation was the first Chaktsa Rinpoche, Kunzang Ngedön Wangpo (*kun bzang nges don dbang po*; d. 1816), an early teacher of Getsé's. He visited Getsé at his ancestral camp when he had first been recognized and in1772 enthroned him at Katok. Getsé received many teachings from him over the years. Getsé is the representative of the middle generation of teachers and the young Zhingkyong and Moktsa incarnations represent

[417] This begs the question about the role of the Kama in the ritual and contemplative life of Katok. As we have seen above most of these large consecrations involve Kama maṇḍalas, but they are never named. This speaks to the primacy accorded Longsel treasures in the new Katok liturgical program.

the third generation. In this section we will see that the autobiographical and biographical literature on lamas from other monasteries who trained at Katok in the early nineteenth century mention both Zhingkyong and Mokdrup quite prominently, especially the former. Mokdrup and Zhingkyong trained these outside lamas well and they became respected lamas in their own right into the middle of the nineteenth century.

Two other teachers active at Katok during the early to mid nineteenth century are also worth mentioning. Their names are Thukchok Dorjé (*thugs mchog rdo rje*) and Tharbum (*thar 'bum*). Their roles at Katok are mentioned towards the end of Getsé's *Autobiography* in a section authored by the second Zingkyong. This section makes it clear that the specialty of these two lamas was teaching the *Secret Nucleus*, in distinction to the trülkus who seem to have been better at giving initiations and reading transmissions. Zhingkyong writes,[418]

> At the beginning of the Earth Rat year (1828; Getsé) was supremely enthused. The tradition of giving explanatory teachings (*bshad srol*) on the commentaries of the classics (such as) the *Secret Nucleus* of the Kama of the Old Translation school and the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, (which contains) the core principles of the *Perfection of Wisdom*,

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[418] Ibid., 343.3; sa byi gsar shar thugs bskyed rmad byung bas/ snga 'gyur bka' ma gsang ba snying po dang/ sher phyin dgongs don mngon rtogs rgyan gzhung 'grel/ bshad srol bla rabs bcu gsum yan chad du/ bzhugs kyang phyis 'dir gzhung don bklags tsam las/ 'grel bshad zhib smrar chos dbyings klong thim yang/ kun mkhyen bla ma rje yi bka' drin gyis/ thugs mchog rdo rjes grwa tshang bcu skor la/ bshad rgyun btsugs shing zla ngo gsum bzhi nas/ kho nyid rang yul btegs shul gnas lnga la/ mkhas shing dad ldan rgyud dul thar 'bum nyid/ yongs 'dzings [read 'dzin] la bskos rgyal bstan rin po cher/ bshad sgrub gnyis char grub 'di skal pa bzang/ zhes pa'i thugs dgyes zhal 'phros yang yang gnang.

> persisted (at Katok) up through the thirteen generations of lamas. Subsequently here at Katok, the meanings of the texts were merely learned by rote (*bklags tsam*), while detailed exegesis had disappeared into the ether (*chos dbyings klong thim*). Yet thanks to the kindness of the omniscient lama (Getsé, this year) Thukchok Dorjé established (the study of) the exegetical tradition for a group of about ten monks. When, after three or four months he departed for his home region, (Getsé) appointed Tharbum as tutor. He is expert in the five sciences, faithful, and disciplined. Getsé was very pleased and repeatedly said "(Thukchok Dorjé and Tharbum's) fulfillment of both the exegesis and practice of the precious Teachings is fantastic!

This excerpt from Zhingkyong is informative for providing the reader with a figure on the number of monks in the classes, which was only ten (*grwa tshang bcu skor*). Apart from this the only other mention of numbers of monks involved with Katok occurs when Getsé mentions that fifty monks were assigned to learn Kama rituals under the visiting teachers from Mindrölling. This helps us get sense of the monastery's populaton at the time, which apparently was low by the standard of today's seminaries (*bshad grwa*).

The recent *Brief History of Katok* by the late abbot Jamyang Gyeltsen is obviously alluding to this passage when it mentions that Getsé appointed Tharbum

and Thukchok Dorjé as abbots (*mkhan po*) at Katok.[419] Fortunately this work gives other identifying information about these lamas beyond simply their names. It refers to Tharbum as the Dzokchen Gemang Wönpo Tharbum (*rdzogs chen dge mang dbon po thar 'bum*)[420] and identifies him as the nephew of the founding lama of Dzokchen Gemang monastery and the paternal uncle of the Dzokchen Monastery's seminary's second abbot Gyelsé Zhenpen Thayé (*rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas*; b. 1800).[421] Jamyang Gyeltsen even says he was a more learned grammarian than Getsé himself![422] The other teacher mentioned in the preceding excerpt is Thukchok Dorjé, a reincarnate lama from Gyiling Monastery in Golok.[423] Later in this section we will see that in 1816 he traveled with Dokhyentsé to Katok to study under Getsé. Dokhyentsé stayed over a year at Katok and perhaps Thukchok Dorjé was able to join Dokhyentsé during all of his private courses with Getsé. Regardless he was one of Getsé's most capable and trusted students. Tukchok Dorjé wrote the closing benedictory verses and printer's colophon of the second xylographic edition of the *Stages of the Path of Secret Mantra* (*gsang sngags lam rim*) – originally composed in

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[419] Jamyang Gyeltsen, *Brief History of Katok*, 109.

[420] Jamyang Gyeltsen, Brief History of Katok, 109 and 111; dge mang rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha' yas kyi khu bo dge mang thar 'bum.

[421] For a brief history of Gemang Monastery see the *Histories of the Monasteries in Kardzé Prefecture*, vol. 2, 237-245.

[422] Jamyang Gyeltsen, *Brief History of Katok*, 111; sgra pa rang las mkhas pa.

[423] Cf. Ibid., 111, where he is called *'gu log gyi ling thugs mchog rdo rje*. In *Dokhyentsé*'s *Autobiography* he is called a "supreme incarnation" (*mchog sprul*), in other words a revered reincarnate lama. I suspect that Gyiling Monastery in "Golok" is actually Kilung Monastery (*kiH lung dgon*), which is very close to Gemang Monastery; See *Histories of the Monasteries in Kardzé Prefecture*, vol. 2, 245-253.

1805 and printed for the first time in 1824 – which was printed sometime after Getsé's death.[424] Thus we see that Getsé had trained several trülkus who were capable at transmitting ritual and meditation instructions, if not the high -level doctrinal teachings, and attracted lamas from outside of Katok who became brilliant teachers and maintained the seminary at Katok during Getsé's later years and after his death.

Trülkus from Other Monasteries Train at Katok

One of Getsé's most renowned students was Dokhyentsé Yeshé Dorjé (*mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje;* 1800-1859), who Dodrupchen recognized as the reincarnation of Jikmé Lingpa (d. 1798). Dokhyentsé was born in Golok, not far from Getsé's home region, and went on to be one of the most charismatic lamas in mid-nineteenth century eastern Tibet. [425] He is best known for his ascetic and peripatetic lifestyle and achieving the rainbow body (*'ja' lus)* upon his death. Getsé only spent two days with Dokhyentsé's predecessor Jikmé Lingpa but still considered him one of his primary gurus. Getsé then corresponded with Jikmé Lingpa and went on to edit Jikmé Lingpa's *Collected Works* and the Nyingma Gyübum, which was based mainly on an arrangement made by Jikmé Lingpa. Getsé maintained his connections to Jikmé Lingpa's treasures through the latter's chief student Dodrupchen Jikmé Trinlé Özer (*'jigs med phrin las 'od zer*; 1745-1821).[426] Dodrupchen came to

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[424] Two different blockprint editions are still extant, each with its own printer's colophon. The 1972 edition is older and was printed during Getsé's life; see bibliography.

[425] Kornman, "A Tribal History," is a translation from the opening passages of Dokyentsé's *Autobiography* and discusses the orgins of the people of Golok.

[426] Bio's in Dudjom and Thundup.

Degé in 1801, soon after his master's death. He immediately became very close with queen Tsewang Lhamo (*tshe dbang lha mo*) and stayed around Degé for many years.[427] Getsé and Dodrupchen collaborated on many projects for the court and traveled together on occasion. Thus when the teenage Dokhyentsé was ready to begin his higher Buddhist studies, his master Dodrupchen advised him to go study the Kama under Getsé and Zhingkyong. This attests to the close relationship between Getsé and Dodrupchen, but also to Getsé's preeminent position among the society of Nyingma lamas in Kham at the time. In all Dokhyentsé studied at Katok for over one year and left a record of his time in his *Autobiography*.

In the summer of 1816, the seventeen year -old Dokhyentsé traveled to Dodrupchen's see of Yarlung Pemakö in Golok. Dodrupchen told him, "At the end of this year you must go to the indestructible seat of Katok and (receive) the initiations and instructions for several (traditions) and also study at the feet of Getrül (i.e., Getsé) Mahāpaṇḍita and the great lord of siddhas Zhingkyong Trülku. I need to stay here and complete (the temple construction) before I die."[428] Dokhyentsé heeded the command and made his way to Katok with a party of approximately ten relatives and lamas. The entourage included Getsé's close student Thukchok Dorjé. Further research is needed to determine the relationship between Dodrupchen, Dokhyentsé,

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[427] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, *Autobiography*, 249.4. Queen Tsewang Lhamo was the wife of the late king Sawang Zangpo, who died in 1790. She was a fervent patron Getsé and Dodrupchen and sponsored several high-profile and expensive projects involving Nyingma texts and deities; Cf. Kolmaš, *A Genealogy of the Kings of Derge,* 42.

[428] Dokhyentsé, Autobiography (mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje'i rnam thar), 114; khyad rang yang lo 'di'i mjug tu kaH thog rdo rje gdan gyi/ dge sprul ma hA paN+Di ta chen po dang/ grub pa'i dbang phyug chen po zhing skyong sprul pa'i sku'i drung du phyin nas/ dbang lung dang slob sbyong kha shas dgos pa rnams nga rang ma shi 'dir mtha' rdzogs dgos zhes bka' gnang.

and Thukchok Dorjé. Before arriving at Katok they visited Degé and Dokhyentsé gave the initiations and reading transmissions for Jikmé Lingpa's chief treasure cycle the Longchen Nyingtik.

Dokhyentsé says that he spent a little bit of time in the capital and then traveled to Katok. Here I will translate in full his account of his time spent at Katok,[429]

> When I arri ved at Katok I met Zhingkyong Trülku Rinpoché and Moktsa. I then went to Bango Hermitage and met the refuge and protector Getsé Trülku Rinpoché. He lovingly looked after me and adamantly ordered that we act like family, like relatives who are newly acquainted. At that time Chaktsa Trülku Rinpoché (had recently) died and I was commanded (by Getsé) to sit at the head of the assembly for the offerings to the corpse, memorial services, and the consecration of

[429] Ibid., 116; kaH thog tu slebs dus/ zhing skyong sprul pa'i sku rin po che dang/ rmog tsha bcas la mjal phrad byung/ de nas sbra 'go ri khrod du phyin/ skyabs mgon dge sprul rin po che'i zhal mjal zhing/ thugs brtse ba chen pos rjes su bzung nas/ ma 'dris pa'i 'dza' bshes dang/ nang lugs kyi bka' bkod dam por gnang/ skabs der phyag tsha sprul sku rin po che'i dgongs pa chos dbyings su thim 'dug pa gdung mchod dang dgongs rdzogs bum sgrub bcas kyi dbur 'dug dgos kyi bka' phebs byung ltar/ gang gsung ldog ma nus pas bka' bzhin sgrub dgos byung/ de nas re zhig dpon g.yog nyung shas tsam bsdad cing/ skyabs mgon ma hA paN+Di ta chen pos/ thog mar bsnyen pa'i kha bskang sogs mdzad nas/ tshogs chen 'dus pa'i 'dus pa mdo dbang chen mo sgo 'byed phyag rdor nas/ mtha' rten tshe dbang gi bar zhag bco lnga tsam du rgyas par gnang/ rjes sgyu sprul zhi khro/ yang dag/ sangs rgyas mnyam sbyor/ dong sprugs/ rong phur sogs bka' ma'i dkyil 'khor che rim gyi dbang lung/ rgyud gsang ba snying po'i 'grel bshad zhib rgyas zla drug bar dbu ma dang grub mtha'i rnam dbye/ dkyil 'khor spyi'i rnam bzhag/ thig tshon dang blos slong gi zhal khrid bcas dang/ bka' brgyad rnam gsum dbang lung/ rgyud gsang ba snying po'i bka' 'grel mi 'dra ba bcu gcig lung/ dam pa bde gshegs kyi bka' 'bum thor bu'i skor/ rje nyid dang kun bzang nges don dbang po'i dka' 'bum skor tshang ma/ gzhan yang man ngag gi skor thor bu bcas smin grol du rjes su bzung/ bar skabs kaH thog dgon chen du phyin nas/ dge sprul rin po che'i bka' bkod ltar sgrub mchod rnams kyi phyag bzhes mthong ba brgyud pa'i rnam bzhag sogs/ blo la nges par byas/ bsgrig lam la yang sa bcad mi stong tsam zhugs/ zhing skyong rin po che'i sku drung nas rig 'dzin bdud 'dul rdo rje'i chos skor dbang lung tshang ma/ rmog sprul rin po che'i drung nas klong gsal chos skor tshang ma/ gong ma'i dag snang phran bu'i skor bcas thob/ re zhig sdod rtsis yin yang/ sde dge lha ldan du byon dgos pa'i don gyis 'bod pa nan tan byung bar brten/ lo gcig lhag tsam las sdod rgyu ma byung bar/

the ritual vase. Unable to refuse what he said, I could only do as I was ordered. Then when only a few people from my entourage were staying with me, the protector and refuge, the great Mahāpaṇḍita, (commenced my training,) first performing the amendment of the ritual service (*bsnyen pa*) and other rituals. Then over fifteen days he extensively performed the *Great Gathered Assembly of the Great Initiation of the Sūtra of the Gathered Intentions*, beginning with Vajrapāni, up through the concluding long life empowerment. Subsequently he (continued to) care for me with ripening and liberating teachings. He gave me the initiations and reading transmissions for the high-level Kama maṇḍalas such as the *Peaceful and Wrathful Magical Net*, *Yangdak*, *Buddhasamāyoga*, *Churner of the Depths of Hell*, and the Rongzom's *Kīla*; and a detailed and extensive exegesis on a *Secret Nucleus* commentary. For six months (he gave me teachings on) Mādhyamaka, the divisions of tenet systems, a general presentation of maṇḍalas together with oral instructions on lines and colors and visualization (*blos slong*); the initiations and reading transmissions of the three traditions of the Eight Pronouncements; the reading transmissions for eleven different commentaries on the *Secret Nucleus* tantra; the reading transmissions for miscellany from the collected works of Dampa Deshek, Getsé and Kunzang Ngedön Wangpo's complete collected works; and furthermore (the reading

transmissions for) miscellaneous esoteric precepts. During the recess (*bar skabs*) I went to the large monastery of Katok and, following Getsé Rinpoché's orders, I gained certainty in my mind about the presentations of the visual lineage of the liturgical rituals of the festivals. I was not completely disengaged from the minutiae of the monastic regulations (*sgrigs lam la yang sa bcad mi stongs tsam zhugs*).[430] From Zhingkyong I received the complete set of initiations and reading transmissions for Rindzin Dündül Dorjé's dharma cycles, and from Mokdrup Trülku Rinpoché, I received the complete dharma cycles of Longsel, together with minor pure visions of my predecessor. Although I had plans to stay for a while, because the Degé (king) had to go to Lhasa they insistently called me (to come to the capital). Therefore I didn't get to stay (at Katok) for more than one year and a half.

Before analyzing this revealing firsthand account of Dokhyentsé, it is important to pair it with Getsé's record of the same series of teachings. Getsé's account is much briefer but includes valuable details that round out the picture of Dokhyentsé's training at Katok. Getsé's description of the young lama's time at the Bango retreat is as follows, "He came up to Bango and for over three months received initiations and reading transmissions for the instructions on the

[430] The Tibetan phrasing is ackward. Khenpo Ngawang Dorjé suggested the reading translated above.

Indestructible Essence (*of the Luminous Expanse*) and the *Sūtra*, *Magical Net*, and *Mind Series* of the early translations, which he then studied."[431] At first glance there seems to be a contradiction between the dates but I read them as pertaining to different phases of the teachings. Getsé's mention of three months of instruction pertains to the initial period of focus on the Kama maṇḍalas, to which Dokhyentsé does not give a length of time. The six-month session detailed by Dokhyentsé is simply not recorded in Getsé's terse *Autobiography*. Perhaps the recess spoken of by Dokhyentsé occurred between these these two sessions. This reading makes the most sense because Dokhyentsé says he spent over one year at Katok and it is safe to assume he spent the majority of this time - nine months - in intensive studies with Getsé in Bango.

A true discrepancy exists between these two accounts in terms of Longsel Nyingpo's Dzokchen treasures. Getsé clearly says that he taught Dokhyentsé the *Indestructible Essence of the Luminous Expanse* and the Kama trio, not just the Kama, as Dokhyentsé gives the impression. As we have seen throughout this chapter, Getsé's unique contribution to the Katok tradition was to pair the Longsel treasures with Kama and there is no reason to believe that he would not also have transmitted this to Dokhyentsé. Furthermore there is a precedent of Getsé teaching the Longsel Dorjé Nyingpo to other lamas from not from Katok (see the account of Zhechen Wöntrül below). Perhaps Dokhyentsé omitted this from his account because he

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[431] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Autobiography, 304.2; spra mgor slar phebs rdo rje snying po'i khrid/ snga 'gyur mdo sgyus sems gsum gtso byas rnams/ zla gsum bar der dbang lung gsan sbyangs mdzad.

wished to give the impression that he was a strict follower of the *Innermost Spirituality of the Great Expanse* (Longchen Nyingtik; *klong chen snying thig*).

If we accept this periodization of Dodrupchen's teachings at Katok - that there was a three-month session followed by a six-month session, with a break in the middle - then a logic to the order becomes apparent. The first session encapsulates Getsé's reformulation of the Katok tradition: Longsel Nyingpo's Dzokchen teaching, the principal Kama maṇḍalas, and a teaching on the *Secret Nucleus*. The second session of teachings that Getsé gave Dokhyentsé represents a return to basics through systematic study of the exoteric vehicle and the transmission of many works needed for advanced study of Nyingma doctrine. For instance, Getsé taught his teenage student Madhyamaka and the four tenet systems of Indian Buddhism. Getsé wrote short texts on both of these topics, which make clear his interpretations of sūtra philosophy.[432] The mention of eleven different commentaries on the *Secret Nucleus* provides the reader with a sense of the number of different commentaries that were still circulating among scholars in the early nineteenth century. This excerpt also indicates that Dampa Deshek's *Collected Works* were by this time not transmitted as an integrated set, most likely because many of his writings were lost. It should be pointed out that this is one of the very few occasions when Getsé gives teachings on a work composed by a Katok master from the pre-Longsel period. Note that Getsé did not choose to mention this transmission in his *Autobiography*.

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[432] Getsé was committed to the viewpoint of other-emptiness (*gzhan stong*) as formulated by the Jonang school. He integrates it into his Nyingma system by claiming that extrinsic emptiness is the same as the view of Dzokchen

After Dokhyentsé's productive stay at Katok he left the monastery and his new teachers for Degé and then Gyelrong. In his own words,[433]

> I requested leave (from Getsé) at Bango and made it to the big monastery (Katok). The trülku's (e.g., Zhingkyong and Moktsa) gave me a not insignificant amount of parting gifts because of the love they had for me through our having mixed minds. The protector and refuge (Getsé) insisted tha t I make efficacious circumambulations around Kumbum Ringmo but only my sister did. Strong forces distracted me and I didn't carry it out. I dropped it thinking that it was an auspicious connection for me to (come back) and do it at a later date, and moved on.

Another of Getsé's students who trained for several years at Katok and became a prominent teacher in the nineteenth century was Zhechen Wöntrül Gyurmé Thutop Namgyel (*zhe chen dbon sprul 'gyur med mthu stobs rnam rgyal*; b. 1787) of Zhechen Monastery. Zhechen Monastery is another one of the new Nyingma monasteries in Degé. [434] Originally Zhechen was an appendage of Dzokchen Monastery, but then became an independent institution and is now considered one of the six mother monasteries of the Nyingma tradition. Zhechen has three major lines

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[433] Ibid., 161.6; sbra 'go nas dgongs pa zhus te/ dgon chen du slebs/ sprul sku rnams nas kyang thugs yid gcig 'dres kyi brtse gzigs mi dman pa'i skyel gtong sogs mdzad/ skyabs mgon bla mas sku 'bum ring mor phyag bskor gnad smin zhig sgrub dgos gsung bka' nan yod kyang/ sring mo ma gtogs nga rang gzhan dbang shugs che bas thog khel ma byung bar rjes sor bsgrub pa'i brten 'grel du bzhag yar theg.

[434] Cf. Histories of the Monasteries in Kardzé Prefecture, vol. 1, 535-543.

of reincarnate lamas: Ranjam (*rab 'byams*), Gyeltsap (*rgyal tshab*), and Wöntrül. The Wöntrül line originated with a student of the second Zhechen Rabjam Gyurmé Kunzang Namgyel (1713-1769), the author of the *Seven Treasuries' Index* featured in the Chapter Three. By far the most important Wöntrül incarnation was this student of Getsé's. Getsé was his primary teacher of Nyingma doctrine and the literary arts and after Getsé's death he became a major teacher in Kham. There is no e xtant autobiography of Zhechen Wöntrül, but a grand-student composed a very detailed life story of him.[435] For many years it existed as a rare manuscript at Zhechen Monastery but in 2000 a new edition was published in India. It is a very rich source of information about Katok's lamas and educational program.

Zhechen Wöntrül's *Biography* strongly suggests that Getsé was the preeminent Nyingma scholar of his generation. In a passage that recounts the year 1799 when Wöntrül was thirteen years old, Wöntrül's tutor died and the other two reincarnate lamas of Zhechen Monastery must find somewhere else for him to train. Katok was the obvious choice. "In the earth sheep year when Wöntrül was thirteen years old the treasurer and great scholar-practitioner Pema Dönden di ed. For the purposes of (Wöntrül's) education in the arts and sciences there was no better place for him to receive training than Katok. Therefore the two reincarnated lamas (of Zhechen) decided that he must go there."[436] Wöntrül arrived at Katok in the summer

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[435] Dorjé Rapten (rdo rje rab brtan; 19th cent.), Biography of Zhechen Wöntrül (mkhas shing dngos grub brnyes pa'i slob dpon 'jam dbyangs dgyes pa'i blo gros mtsho skyes bshad pa'i sgra dbyangs kyi rtogs brjod mdor bsdus skal bzang mgul rgyan).

[436] Ibid., sa lug [1799] dgung lo bcu gsum bzhes tshe phyag mdzod mkhas grub chen po pad+ma don ldan sku gshegs song bas/_de phyin rig gnas bslab sbyang du kaH thog tu byon na ma gtogs sprul sku 'di sku

of the following year. He immediately went to Getsé's personal retreat Bango and began his studies. Zhechen Wöntrül stayed at Katok for three years, a considerable amount of time.

Getsé's description of what he taught Zhechen Wöntrül is characteristica lly brief. He says, "Zechen (e.g., Zhechen) Trülku came to (improve his) education and study the scriptures. I trained him beginning with the *Kalāpa* (grammatical system). I offered him what was appropriate to his intellectual and physical capabilities: poetry, prosody, initiations and instructions on channels, winds, and clear light, plus the reading transmissions for sections of the Longsel and Dündül (treasures)."[437] in order to convey a full picture of the range of teachers active at Katok during this time and to give a sense of the Katok curriculum here I will give a translation of the complete account in the *Biography of Zhechen Wöntrül* of the topics he studied at Katok:[438]

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yon legs par 'byong thabs shig dka' 'dug pas de ltar bya dgos zer sprul sku rnam gnyis bcas kyis thugs thag bcad/

[437] Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita, Autobiography, 244.7: ze chen dbon sprul sku yon dang/ chos bka' gsan sar bdag rtsar phebs byung bar/ ka la pa yi dbu nas bslabs pa dang/ snyan ngag sdeb sbyor dbang khrid rtsa rlung dang/ 'od gsal klong gsal bdud 'dul chos tshan lung/ blo nus lus kyis gang lcogs 'bul bar byas.

[438] Dorjé Rapten, *Biography of Wöntrül*, p. 65.4: lcags sprel [1800] gnam lo gsar 'char gyi zla ba drug pa'i nang du/_tshe rabs du ma nas mthun pa'i grogs su me mar dang sdong bu lta bur gyur pa dge slong 'gyur med chos rgyal grogs su khrid nas/_skyel ma dang bcas snga 'gyur bstan pa'i chu mgo gangs la thugs pa lta bu mkhas dang grub pa'i 'byung gnas shar kaH thog rdo rje gdan du dam pa chos kyi phyir skom pa chu 'dod pa'i tshul gyis phyin nas/_zla ba de'i tshes nyer gcig nyin gza' skar dus sbyor phun sum tshogs pa 'dzoms par/_dpal rdo rje 'chang dang ngo bo rnam dbyer med pa bka' drin 'khor med mtshan brjod par dka' ba/_gnas lnga rig pa'i paN+Di ta chen po 'gyur med tshe dbang mchog grub sbra mgo ri khrod du bzhugs pa'i drung du mjal/_sangs rgyas thams cad kyi gsung rdo rje'i rang gzugs rdo rje rnon po dngos kyi dad pa thob/_zhe chen pa'i zhu rgya dang rdil tshad rta rmig ma bcas phul/_lugs gnyis kyi sgo nas rjes su bzung ba'i dbugs dbyung bstsal/_skyel ma rnams rang yul du log_/zla ba bdun pa'i tshes gcig la dbu 'dzug gis/_sgra ka lA pa sa bzang 'grel chen gyi steng nas/_mtshams sbyor lnga/_nA drug_/A brgyad/_kr-ita drug bcas kyi ri mo rnams bslab sbyang rgyugs 'bul bcas rang rkya thub pa sbyangs/_zla ba bcu gnyis pa'i tshes nyer bzhi'i nyin sgra tsan+d+ra pa'i ri mo'i dbu bzung nas/_kun mkhyen si tu chos kyi 'byung gnas kyi 'grel chen pod gsum dang /_'dod 'jo rtsa 'grel pod gnyis bcas pa dang /_gzhan yang dbyangs can sgra mdo dang /_pA Ni pa'i ri mo mthar chags dang /_sdeb sbyor rin chen 'byung gnas kyi steng nas sum 'bebs kyis dper brjod pr-it+ta dzA ti'i rigs dbye tha dad pa phal cher dang /_ngo mtshar rtogs byed kyi cho ga bcas zhib la

They began on the first day of the seventh month. On the basis of the Sazang's *Large Commentary* on the Kalāpa system of Sanskrit grammar he studied and was tested on the patterns (*ri mo*) of the five sandhi, six *nā*, eight *ā*, and six *krita*. He studied with self-sufficiency. On the twenty-fourth day of the twelfth month, beginning with the patterns of the *Cāndrapa* Sanskrit grammatical system, he (studied and then) gave a detailed and perfect exam on the three-volume great commentary by the omniscient Situ Chökyi Jungné together with the two volumes of the root text (of the *Amarakośa*) and its commentary the *Kāmadhenu*; additionally, the *Sārasvatavyākaraṇa*, the complete series of patterns in the Pā ṇinian system, on the basis of the *Candroratnākara* (he studied) the three forms of prosody: prita, jati, and the "expression of marvelous realizations" (*ngo mtshar rtogs brjod*). Furthermore he also gave an exam on the composition (of poetry based on his study) of all three chapters of the *Kāvyādarśa*. (When Getsé) was instructing him in this curriculum (*bslab sbyang de rigs*), (Wöntrül) did not feign incomprehension about what he actually understood. He trained such that he was able to give explanations and practice from off the top of his head or with a mere glance at the texts.

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gtsang dag rgyugs phul ba dang /_slar yang snyan ngag le'u gsum ka'i rtsom rgyugs kyang phul te/_bslab sbyang de rigs khrid ni khrid la shes ni ma shes zer ba'i byas lo dang thos lo ma byas par thugs thog dang dpe cha la'ang gzigs pa tsam gyis bshad pa dang lag len thebs nges su sbyangs.

This ends the section on Wöntrül's robust training in the literary arts, mastery of which was highly prized in Degé. A large part of the appeal of Situ Penchen and Zhuchen to the Degé court was that they were masters of the literary arts with skills of translation and composition that could rivals those of the great paṇḍitas of the Tibetan renaissance and beyond. Getsé inherited this mantle and gained great prestige in Degé for his skill in grammar and editing, as witnessed by his work with the Degé Printing house. Expertise in the literary arts was a key component of socially valued learning and prestige in Degé and this was doubtelessly an important reason why Getsé taught Sanskrit grammar and poetics at Katok. Furthermore a substantial portion of the texts he studied were editions newly translated in the previous cent ury by Situ Penchen, making this passage useful for determining the reception history of Situ's efforts to revitalize classical learning in Tibet.[439]

Immediately following the above excerpt is a long passage on Wöntrül's contemplative, ritual, and doctrinal training at Katok:[440]

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[439] As an aside, while Getsé was certainly an heir to Situ Penchen and Zhuchen's lines of instruction on the literary arts, he did not also study medicine, which they did. Furthermore it may be pointed out that the study of pramāṇa was not widespread in Degé during this time.

[440] Dorjé Rapten, Biogarphy of Zhechen Wöntrül, 67.1; skyabs rje de nyid kyi mdun nas klong gsal skor pod bcu gnyis dang /_bla ma dgongs 'dus kyi dbang lung tshang ma/_sgyu 'phrul zhi khro'i dbang dang /_rab 'byams pa o rgyan chos grags kyi yig cha'i steng nas rgyud kyi spyi don dang /_gsang bdag dgongs rgyan steng nas tshig don rnams smin khrid zab rgyas dang /_khyad par du klong gsal rdo rje snying po'i khrid sngon 'gro dang /_bskyed rdzogs kyi nyams khrid/_khyad par khregs chod dang thod rgal gyi khrid rnams thun mong ma yin pa'i lugs su bstsal nas/_rig pa rang ngo gcer mthong du sprod pas zab pa dang rgya che ba'i phyogs gnyis ka nas bka' drin 'khor med kyi rtsa ba'i bla mar gyur pa'o/_/kaH thog grub pa'i dbang po rdo rje 'chang mchog sprul kun bzang nges don dbang po nas/_klong gsal gyi rtsa rlung smin khrid 'khrul 'khor bcas pa gnang nas sbyang ba gnad du 'gro nges mdzad pa'i phyag rjes phyi nang gi drod skye ba dang /_khyad par mchin nad kyi bsnyun khams yod pa'ang lhag med du dag_/gter chen bdud 'dul gyi gter chos dang bka' 'bum pod bcu gsum gyi dbang lung yongs rdzogs/_de nang nyams len dogs gcod skor sogs zhib la gtsang dag gi bka' drin rgya chen po bstsal/_shes bya kun gzigs mchog sprul si tu rin po

The lord of refuge (Getsé also gave to Wöntrül): all of the initiations and reading transmissions for the twelve volumes of Longsel's treasure cycles and the *Gathering of the Guru's Intention*; the initiation of the *Peaceful and Wrathful Deities of the Magical Net*; and the profound and vast maturing instructions of the a) general meaning of the (*Secret Nucleus*) tantra on the basis of Rabjam Orgyen Chödrak's textbook and b) (the tantra's) words and their meanings on the basis of the *Ornament of the Lord of Secret's Intention*. In particular, (Getsé gave Wöntrül) the instructions on the *Indestructible Essence of the Clear Expanse*, (including) the preliminaries and the experiential instructions on the generation and completion stages. Notably, bestowing the uncommon traditions of cutting through and leapover instructions, (Getsé) introduced (Wöntrül) to the naked seeing of the true face of awareness, thus making (Getsé his) root lama, whose uninterrupted kindness (flowed) from the two poles of the profound and the vast. Choktrül Kunzang Ngedön Wangpo, Katok's Vajradhara Lord of Siddhas, gave (Wöntrül) the ripening instructions for Longsel's channels and winds practices together with the yogic exercises, thereby giving rise to the warmth of the outer and inner

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che o rgyan bsam grub nas bdud 'dul pod bcu gsum gyi dbang lung mtha' rgyas/_bka' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa pod bcu gnyis kyi dbang lung yongs rdzogs bcas gnang /_skyabs rje thams cad mkhyen pa rdo rje 'chang dngos rig 'dzin 'jigs med mgon po dang /_rmog sprul snying gi nor bu 'jigs bral chos dbyings rdo rje rnam pa gnyis nas lugs gnyis ka'i sgo nas brtse gzigs rgya che la/_khyad par du snga ma'i mdun nas drag po ye shes rab 'bar gyi dbang lung dang /_rjes ma'i mdun nas klong gsal gter byon dbang lung yongs rdzogs sogs gsan/

> signs of having actualized effective training. Strikingly, even though (Wöntrül) had the ailment of liver disease it was purified without a trace. (Kunzang Ngedön Wangpo) also kindly bestowed on him the complete series of initiations and reading transmissions for the thirteen volumes of Dündül Dorjé's treasures and writings, and a careful and pure teaching on eliminating doubts about the practices contained therein, and so forth. The omniscient Choktrül Situ Rinpoché Orgyen Samdrup gave (Wön trül) all the initiations and reading transmissions of the thirteen volumes of the Dündül (treasures) and the twelve volumes of the *Gathering of the Sugatas of the Eight Transmitted Precepts*. (The second Zhingkyong) Rikdzin Jikmé Gonpo – the lord of refuge who is actually omniscient Vajradhara – and the jewel of the essence Moktrül Jikdrel Chöying showed him great kindness by way of the two systems (worldly and spiritual). In particular, (Wöntrül) received the initiations and readings transmissions of the *Fierce Guru Blazing Gnosis* from the former (e.g., Zhingkyong) and all of the initiations and reading transmissions for Longsel's treasures from the latter (e.g., Moktrül).

Zhechen Wöntrül spent three years at Katok studying under their full complement of t eachers. This dossier of studies does not contain any unexpected texts or subjects. It is very similar to Dokhyentsé's dossier, written over fifteen years later. Thus these two accounts of studies at Katok strongly suggest that Getsé had

codified a very distinctive curriculum involving the Longsel treasures and Secret Nucleus exegesis. It is a very streamlined case with each of the two major areas of training - contemplation and doctrinal systems - largely covered by one set of scriptures; namely, the *Indesctructible Essence of the Clear Expanse* and the *Secret Nucleus*. It bears repeating that the writings of earlier Katok lamas are nearly absent from the new program.

Conclusion

This chapter concludes a two hundred year history of Katok that began when Katok was caught up in the social upheavals attending the rise of the Degé kingdom in the middle of the seventeenth century. It was shown that during this time Katok was taken over by a religious figure who did not fit the mold of the earlier Katok traditions, the treasure revealer Longsel Nyongpo (1625-1692). Rather than being a monk or scholar of the Kama, this treasure revealer from Litang altered Katok's administration through placing his family members and reincarnations of his teachers in administrative control. His treasures eclipsed the primacy of the earlier Kama traditions, and his family members and associated reincarnations maintained their power for generations. This changed at the end of the eighteenth century when Getsé reinvented the Katok tradition. This chapter has shown how he transformed the monastery through reviving the Kama through the wholesale importation of the Kama texts of another monastery, and by codifying the Longsel treasures with new liturgical texts and meditation manuals. Furthermore Getsé made room for both in

his reformulation of Katok. The Kama dominated tantric exegesis and had a strong presence in the liturgical calendar. Longsel's treasures dominated Katok's Dzokchen teachings and also had a strong presence in the liturgical calendar, perhaps even more prominent than the Kama. Getsé's many capable trülku and scholar students maintained his innovations and transmitted them to later generations of monks and lamas at Katok. The blueprints for Katok devised by Getsé have been supplemented (by the serious study of exoteric doctrines, for instance) but not seriously challenged.

Conclusion

This dissertation traces a two-hundred-year period from the middle of the seventeenth century to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the conclusion of which finds Katok monastery, and the Degé kingdom in which it was located, in radically altered form. Degé began the period as a new kingdom undergoing explosive growth, but the continuance of its military, economic, and social expansion was far from guaranteed. At the time of its founding, the kingdom boasted few monasteries and no historical reputation for cultural greatness. Nevertheless, a string of Degé kings proved to be talented statesmen and led the kingdom to become not only a major power in eastern Tibet, but also one of the most renowned and culturally prestigious polities in the history of the Tibetan plateau. Exploring the details of the growth of the Degé royal court per se is beyond the purview of this study. However, my primary subject- the oldest monastery in Degé and the changes it underwent during the rise and golden age of the kingdom – sheds important light on religious aspects of Degé and the complex interdependence of the kingdom and its monasteries

Using a wealth of contemporaneous Tibetan language sources, I analyzed how Katok's lamas led a constant revision of the monastery as an institution as they found their way through controversies pertaining to institutional modalities (meritocratic

vs. hereditary and lay vs. celibate), codification of doctrines and rituals, and political engagement across the specific landscape of their unique Nyingma heritage. Through the examination of this specific case, I address broader questions about the institutionalization of scholastic and contemplative strands of Buddhism, relations between celibate and married religious specialists, the roles of lamas in society, the interdependence of transmitted and revealed religious traditions, and the socio-political dimensions of competing literary and liturgical traditions.

Over the course of almost two centuries Katok Monastery was transformed by direct interventions from the Degé kingdom, broader trends in the region and Nyingma sect, and the reformulations attempted by Katok lamas. To review the broad contours of the dissertation, in the middle of the seventeenth century the burgeoning Degé kingdom took an aggressive approach to securing its hold on the southern regions of Katok, Pelyül, and Garjé. The king confiscated the lands owned by the ruling lamas at Katok and installed at the monastery a lama who was a close chaplain of the royal family. This event was traumatic for Katok not only because of the politically motivated interruption to its own administration and economy, but also because the specific traits of the lama in question – Longsel Nyingpo – challenged the governing paradigm of Katok monastery that was a part of its longstanding self-conception. Katok had a long historical affiliation with the Kama, monasticism, and scholasticism, and in the middle of the seventeenth century these three components of the Katok tradition were still vital to the monastery's sense of its own distinctive identity. The lama that the royal court of Degé imposed on the monastery embodied a

different complex of literary, moral, social, and administrative traditions which important lamas of Katok had rejected or at least kept at arm's length over the centuries. This dissertation began with an account of treasure revealer Longsel Nyingpo's arrival at Katok, covering the circumstances of his placement at Katok, the changes he implemented at the monastery, and the accommodations he attempted to make between his treasures and Katok's association with the Kama. Subsequent chapters covered both how Katok lamas of later generations embraced, reacted against, or actively tried to modify Longsel's treasures and the institutional changes he brought to the monastery. Furthermore this study also examined the impact on Katok of several trends and movements that originated outside of the monastery from broad regional trends. These include Mindrölling Monastery's systematization and revitalization of the Kama, Situ Penchen's monastic revival campaign, the ascendency of classical studies, and the rise of reincarnated lamas at the helms of major Nyingma monasteries in Degé.

The final chapter analyzed the historic solution to the crisis engendered at Katok by Longsel's abrupt intervention. This solution was developed by Getsé in the late eighteenth century, and consisted of a revival of the Kama conjoined with a revision and new codification of Longsel's treasures, both of which were significantly altered in the process. Rather than revising Katok's own ancient Kama traditions, Getsé imported wholesale the new Kama rituals and tantric commentaries from Mindröling Monastery. In terms of the treasures, Getsé thoroughly reworked several of Longsel's treasures through the composition of commentaries and liturgies,

making them suitable for use in the changed liturgical and contemplative environments of turn-of-the-nineteenth-century Katok. The dissertation closes with a newly dynamic Katok that was a vibrant center of learning and ritual integrating the two ancient sides of the Nyingma tradition, Kama and Terma, but with a strong monastic and scholarly focus. In addition, the new Katok was a central religious and political institution in the Degé kingdom, and their monastic and political fortunes were inextricably bound together.

Future directions

One reason for having written this dissertation about Katok, and not one of the other key Nyingma monasteries in Degé, is that there is a wealth of illuminating literature from this time period composed by Katok lamas that is unmatched in quantity by the other monasteries. This corpus of materials would enable the expansion of any one of the dissertation's chapters into a monograph-length study of its own. Many of the texts used for this study came into public circulation only within the last fifteen years. For example, Dampa Deshek's *Biography* was recently carved onto woodblocks several years ago and a hardcopy of the work can be acquired only at Katok Monastery. Dündül Dorjé and Longsel Nyingpo's complete *Collected Treasures* first became available only in 1997. Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita's *Collected Works* were published for the first time at the beginning of this millennium, before which his *Autobiography* and most other works were unavailable for the scholarly public. Furthermore, the *Thoroughly Expanded Edition of the Nyingma*

Kama and the *Thirteen Great Instruction Lineages of the Katok Aural Tradition* (in one -hundred and twenty and thirteen volumes, respectively) are also newly available. Needless to say scholars are only just beginning to study the works contained therein, and there is a wealth of possible research direction that are open for the future.

Chapter One could be further developed in a number of directions. In general, Tibetologists have not begun to take advantage of the plethora of materials from and about the Degé kingdom. This study has brought to light some of the social forces and cultural textures of the kingdom during its first century and a half. To be more precise, the topic of Nyingma treasure cults and state formation in the seventeenth century has been addressed by this chapter, but has the potential to be developed into a study that is transregional and comparative. The chapter demonstrated that in the early decades of the Degé kingdom the court patronized treasure revealers and collaborated with them in the founding and administration of local monasteries. Degé was not alone, since during these same decades the burgeoning government of the fifth Dalai Lama was also deeply involved with treasure revealers and cults, as was Sikkim (both were founded in 1642). However, at least in the case of Degé, the royal court's involvement with actual treasure revealers was short lived. After the time of Longsel Nyingpo and Nyima Drakpa of Dzokchen, treasure revealers cease to be high profile figures in Degé, either at the capital or at the monasteries. Thus the case of Degé could serve as the beginning of a comparative study that analyzed both the

roles of the treasure cults in state formation and the circumstances surrounding the decline of the status accorded treasure revealers in the states, when relevant.

Tsewang Norbu, the chief protagonist of Chapter Two, was a politically and culturally important figure whose significance has been recognized for decades. I bring to light new information and perspectives on his early life and later involvement with Katok monastery, which provides an initial entry into the analysis and import of his extremely revealing correspondences. Chapter Three takes a broad-based look at trends in mid-eighteenth-century Degé religion. The rise of trülkus and monasticism at the local Nyingma monasteries has not been covered elsewhere and the chapter only begins the evaluation of its implications for the development of the sect overall. Much more work needs to be done on the transformations of the Nyingma sect in the eighteenth century, which began at Mindrölling Monastery in Central Tibet but came to maturity to the east in Degé.

Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita's reformulation of Katok – in which the treasures and Kama have equal footing, and Kama scholarship and classical learning are prominent – represents a missing link between the tantric and often lay-based Nyingma communities and the thriving Nyingma monastic academies of the early twentieth century with their strong traditions of exoteric scholasticism. The sketch of education at Katok in the early nineteenth century in Chapter Four is based on Getsé Mahāpaṇḍita's *Autobiography,* which because of its recent date of publication is only being seriously studied for the first time in this dissertation. It has yet to be taken into account by many scholars working on later Nyingma scholasticism. For instance,

Dreyfus's historical sketch of Nyingma higher learning in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries speaks of a general "decline" until the second half of the nineteenth century and "restrictions" on Katok, whose "influence remained limited."[441] This chapter strongly demonstrates that beginning in the last decade of the eighteenth century Getsé made a systematic and effective effort to revive Kama and sūtra studies at Katok. This pushes back Dreyfus' chronology, which locates the beginning of the renaissance of Nyingma scholarship only in the second half of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the sources consulted for this work do not evince any notion of governmental restriction being placed on higher learning at Katok at any time. In fact, the Degé kingdom fervently supported scholarship. Getsé trained to become a mahāpaṇḍita in large measure because of the high valuation placed on such scholarly ideals among the court lamas of Degé. Furthermore the notion of the limited influence of Katok is also questionable. As clearly shown in Chapter Four, Getsé attracted students from other monasteries and set up an infrastructure whereby the teaching of the Kama at Katok would persist after his passing. Some scholars of the nonsectarian movement often represent their object of study as bursting on the scene in the late nineteenth century, and primarily in reaction to a vaguely formulated notion of a threat emanating from the Geluk school. What we see from Getsé is that his main concerns regarding the revival of studies at Katok originated within his sect and in his locale of Degé. He had no farther to look than early Katok in order to find a model for Nyingma scholarship and mentions as much.

[441] Dreyfus, The Sound of Two Hands Clapping, 147.

Just as the data and analysis for this study can serve as beginning point for the nonsectarian movement and the efflorescence of Nyingma higher learning in the early twentieth century, so too this study can work as the endpoint of the first several centuries of Katok history. As stated in the Introduction, Katok's origins are historically important and unusual for many reasons. Moreover, many major and minor writings by lamas of the early period are still extant, yet are larg ely unanalyzed by contemporary scholars. This study has opened up new horizons for the study of early Katok by presenting some of the core institutional dynamics that animate the monastery. With this historical framework as a crutch it is hoped that scholars will begin to study and translate the many treatises written by Katok lamas of the pre -Longsel period. The extant materials have much to contribute to our knowledge of the Zur School of exegesis, the development of commentaries on the nine vehicles, and scholastic commentaries of treasure texts. A study of the interplay and tensions between Kama and Terma at early Katok would reveal much about the early social and literary histories of each and be a perfect complement to the present study.

At the end of this study I am happy I can report that Katok Monastery thrives to this day. After the trauma and devastation of the Maoist period the monastery has been rebuilt and currently has several hundred monks and a robust commentarial school. Certainly the monastery works within challenging constraints imposed by the government but the reincarnations of Drimé Zhingkyong, Mokdrup, Gönnyin, and others, have worked skillfully within and around the system to revive many of the

monastery's old traditions and also to ground the monastery's economy in the generous financial networks of global and pan-Asian Buddhism. For the time being the monastery is doing very well but many challenges remain. Katok faces the same panoply of problems that all monasteries are dealing with; especially, how to alter its training and pastoral programs so that it remains relevant and attractive to monks and laypeople who have more and more experience in the public school system and exposure to the broader world. A promising solution to this dilemma is to develop modern interpretations and expressions of Buddhist ethics and soteriology, and disseminate them through popular culture. To date Katok has not been on the forefront of the efforts to articulate "modern" forms of Buddhism that might express innovative approaches to the predicaments of twentieth-century ethnic Buddhists in the People's Republic of China. Despite this, there is a groundswell of such movements in other parts of eastern Tibet that are slowly influencing Katok, and only time will tell the new forms the monastery will take as it reacts to these influences, and other forces. Of course, other creative strategies will also be required if the monastery will be able to survive and thrive for another century. There is a role for those of us in international academia to yet play in the future of such Buddhist and other Tibetan communities, and I look forward to being an active participant in the coming years.

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